



68 PAGES OF TWISTED TALES OF TERROR!

NIGHTMARE

TM

APRIL
1971

50¢



BORIS-70

**WHEN
THE
DAWN
GODS
WAR!**

PLUS MANY MORE
EXCITING STORIES IN
THIS ALL-ORIGINAL
TOP TALENT ISSUE!



WHEN DAWN GODS WAR PG 28



BEWARE EVILS PG 56



THE WARLOCK PG 48

NIGHTMARE

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INNER MAN PG 4



ROTTEN DEAL PG 36

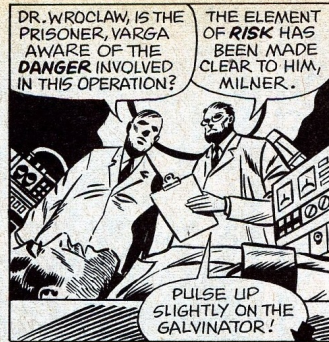


VAULT OF A VAMPIRE PG 20



THE VICTIMS PG 14

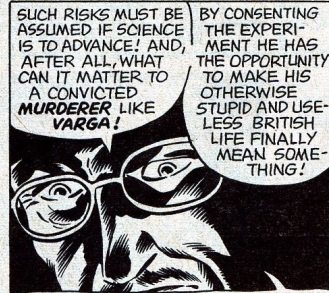
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DR. WROCLAW, IS THE PRISONER, VARGA AWARE OF THE DANGER INVOLVED IN THIS OPERATION?

THE ELEMENT OF RISK HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR TO HIM, MILNER.

PULSE UP SLIGHTLY ON THE GALVINATOR!



SUCH RISKS MUST BE ASSUMED IF SCIENCE IS TO ADVANCE! AND, AFTER ALL, WHAT CAN IT MATTER TO A CONVICTED MURDERER LIKE VARGA!

BY CONSENTING THE EXPERIMENT HE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE HIS OTHERWISE STUPID AND USELESS BRITISH LIFE FINALLY MEAN SOMETHING!

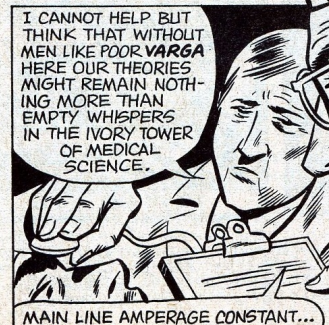
VOLTAGE CONSTANT, INCREASE XP RAY!



AND IF WE FAIL?

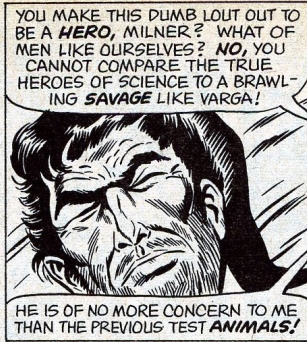
THEN HE DIES A FEW HOURS EARLIER THAN THE LAW DECREES IT MATTERS LITTLE!

HEART STEADY... BLOOD PRESSURE OKAY...



I CANNOT HELP BUT THINK THAT WITHOUT MEN LIKE POOR VARGA HERE OUR THEORIES MIGHT REMAIN NOTHING MORE THAN EMPTY WHISPERS IN THE IVORY TOWER OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

MAIN LINE AMPERAGE CONSTANT...



YOU MAKE THIS DUMB LOUT OUT TO BE A HERO, MILNER? WHAT OF MEN LIKE OURSELVES? NO, YOU CANNOT COMPARE THE TRUE HEROES OF SCIENCE TO A BRAWLING SAVAGE LIKE VARGA!

HE IS OF NO MORE CONCERN TO ME THAN THE PREVIOUS TEST ANIMALS!



CAN YOU FEEL NO KINSHIP WITH HIM AS A MAN? NO SYMPATHY?

NONE! BEGIN THE EXPERIMENT!

SWITCH ON TAPED CONTROL!



TAPE ON!

INCREASE XP RAY TO ONE HUNDRED!

ELECTROMICROSCOPE SHOWS DEFINITE MOLECULAR SHIFT! ATOMIC STRUCTURE IS SHRINKING!

IT'S WORKING!

INCREASE RAY TO ONE THOUSAND!

HE MUST BE IN TERRIBLE PAIN!

INCREASE RAY TO MAXIMUM!



MY GOD! WROCLAW, IT'S WORKING!

NO! NOT GOD'S DOING BUT MINE!

I MAY HAVE SAVED THIS OVERCROWDED WORLD FROM EXTINCTION!

CAREFUL, DOCTOR. HE'S VERY CONFUSED AND FRIGHTENED!

HE'S FALLING OFF THE TABLE!

CATCH HIM, MILNER! WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM BACK UNDER THE XP RAY!

HE CAN'T GET OUT OF THE ROOM DOCTOR. WE'LL FIND HIM!

YOU FOOL! THE SHRINKING PROCESS IS STILL GOING ON! SOON HE'LL BE TOO SMALL TO SEE WITHOUT THE AID OF A MICROSCOPE!

DAMN HIM! IF HE GETS AWAY I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO PROVE MY THEORY!

A HECTIC HOUR LATER:



THE STUPID FOOL! IF HE'D STAYED UNDER THE RAY I COULD HAVE STOPPED THE SHRINKING!



HE'S LOST TO US FOREVER, DOCTOR, I'D BETTER SEE THE WARDEN... THINK UP SOME STORY THE STATE AUTHORITIES WILL BUY!



GO TO IT, MILNER. AND REMEMBER, SHOULD THERE BE AN INVESTIGATION, YOU'RE AS GUILTY AS I!



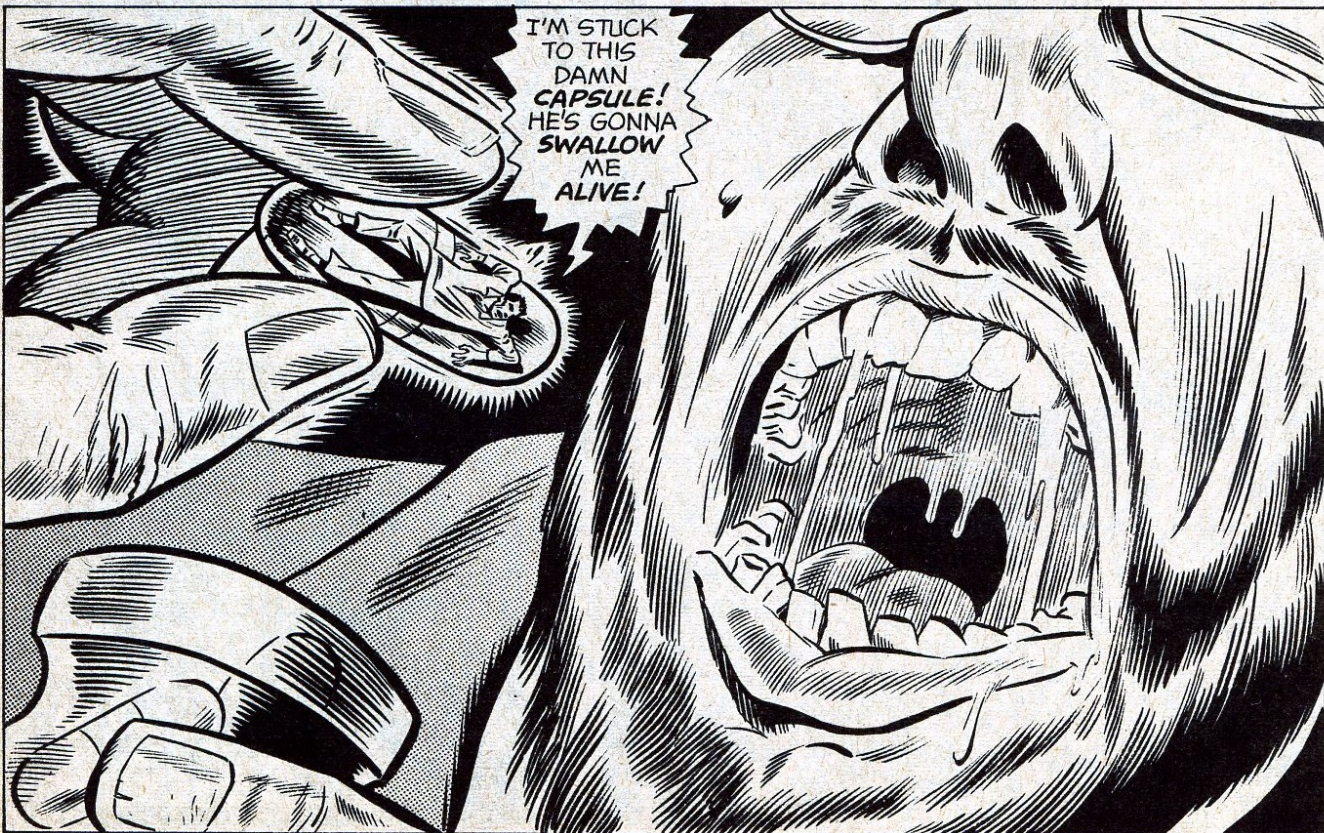
NERVES SHOT... BETTER TAKE A TRANQUILIZER!



HMM. CAP'S LOOSE.



THERE... CAN'T LET THIS GET ME DOWN. MUST GO ON TO OTHER EXPERIMENTS!



I'M STUCK TO THIS DAMN CAPSULE! HE'S GONNA SWALLOW ME ALIVE!

...INSIDE
WROCLAW'S
BODY...
GASP!
SALIVA'S
BURNING!
CHOKE!!

THERE!

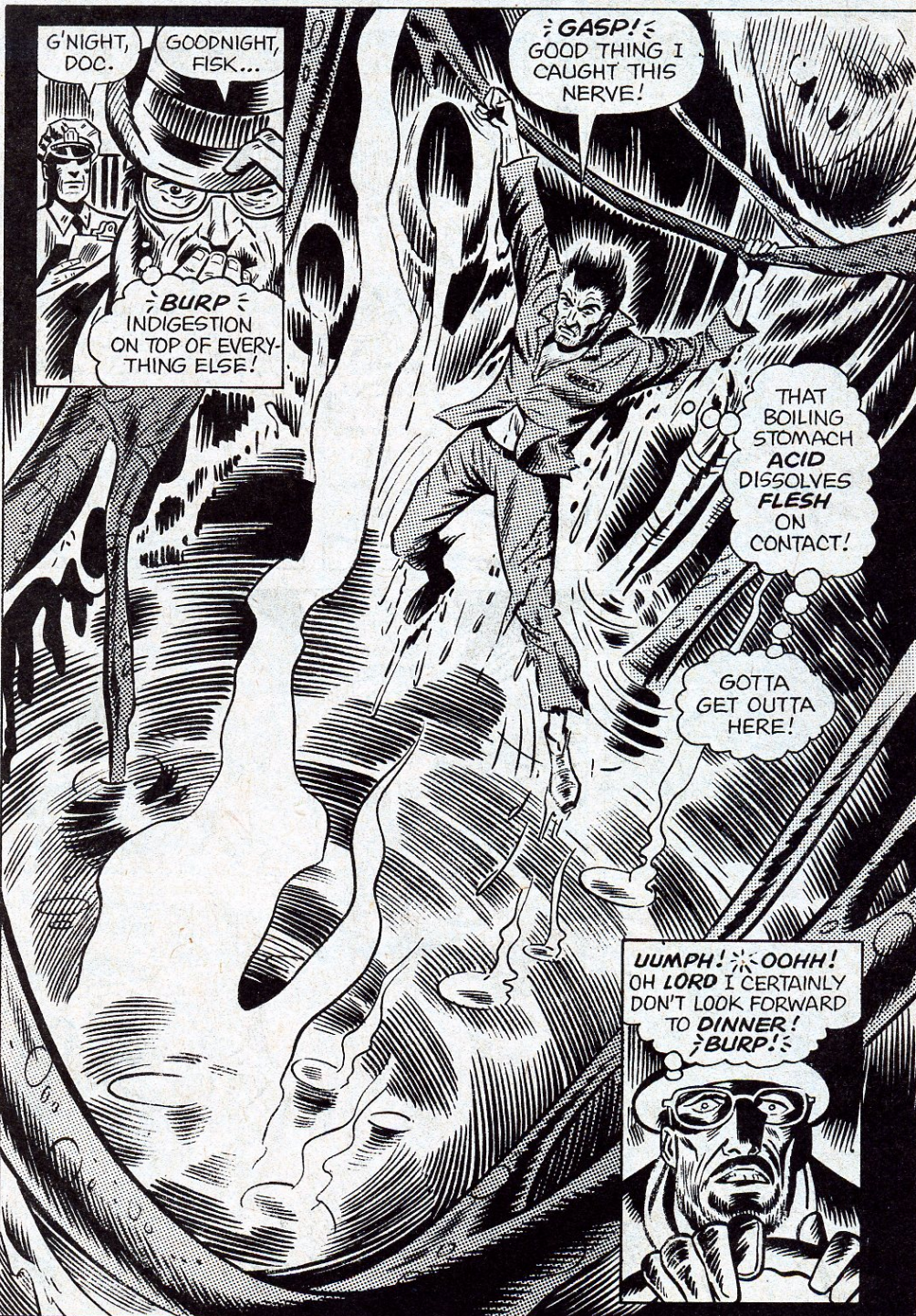
I'M
UNSTUCK
FROM
THE
CAPSULE!

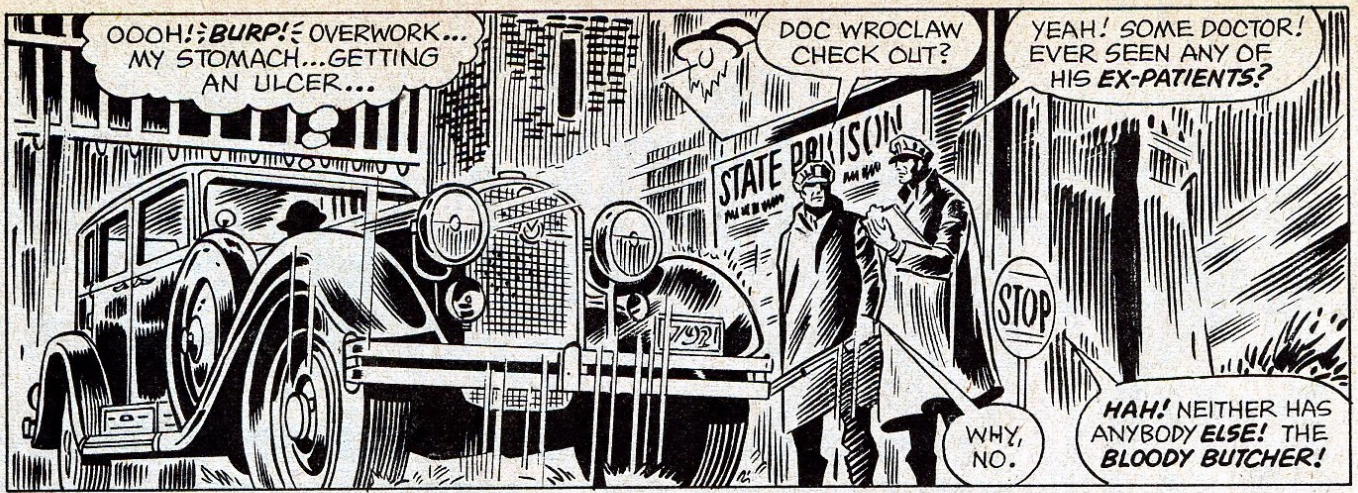
CAN'T
STOP
MYSELF...

BEING
WASHED
DOWN
TO
THE
STOMACH!

BETTER BE ON MY WAY, ELIZABETH CARRYS
ON SO WHEN I'M LATE FOR DINNER!

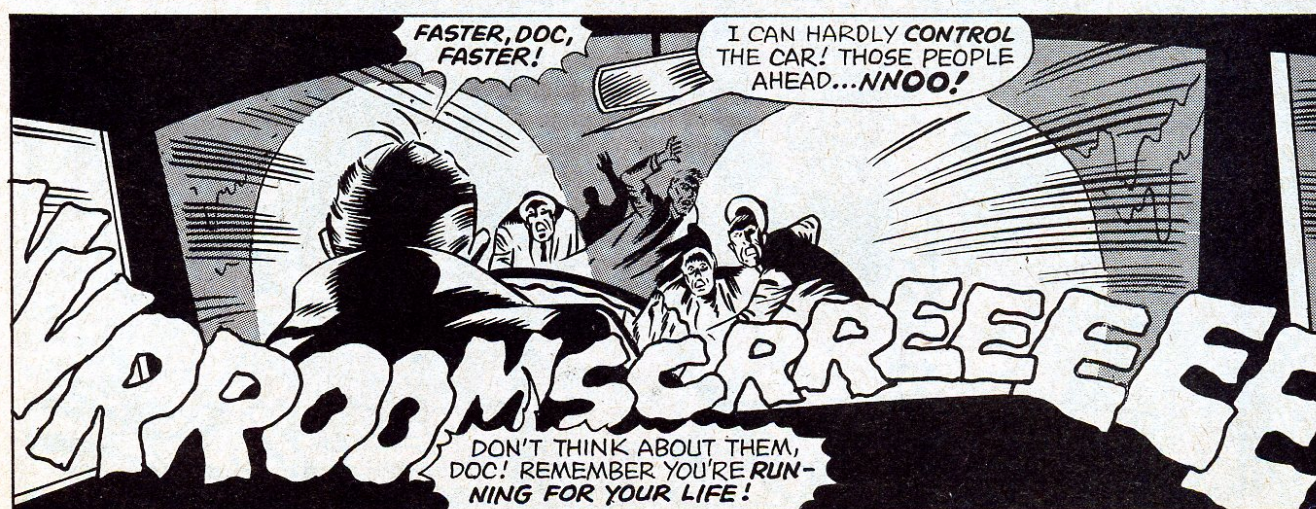
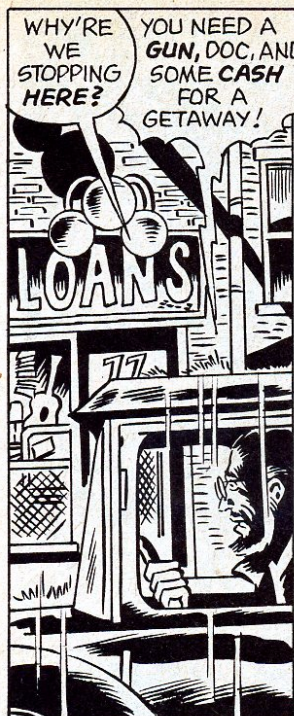
MILNER WILL SMOOTH THINGS
OUT WITH THE AUTHORITIES
HE ALWAYS DOES!

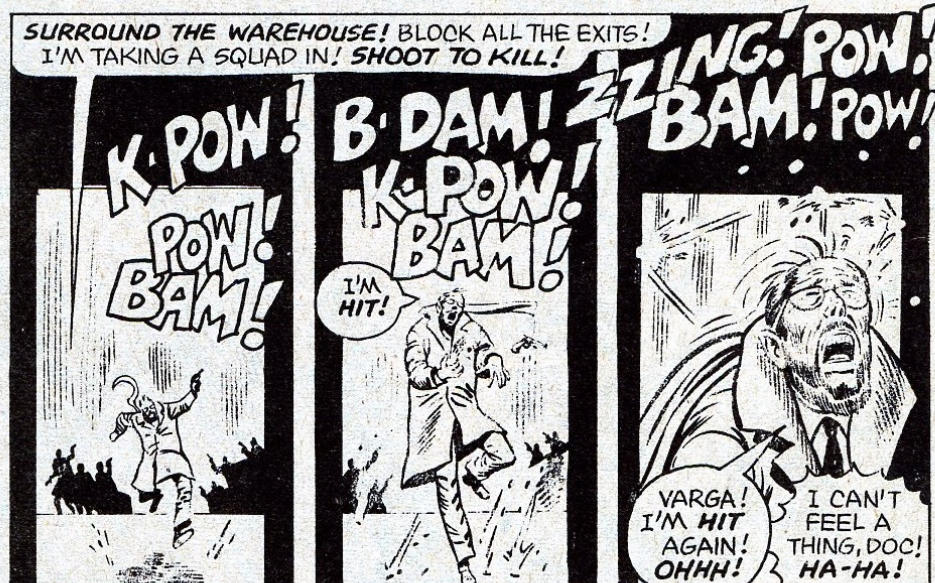
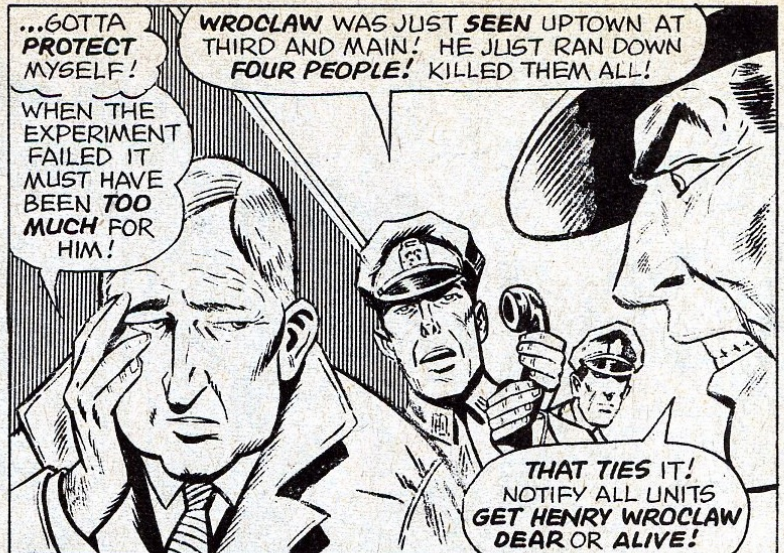
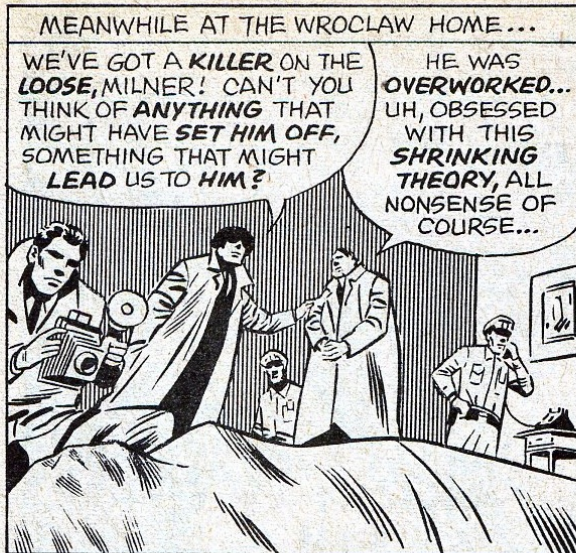


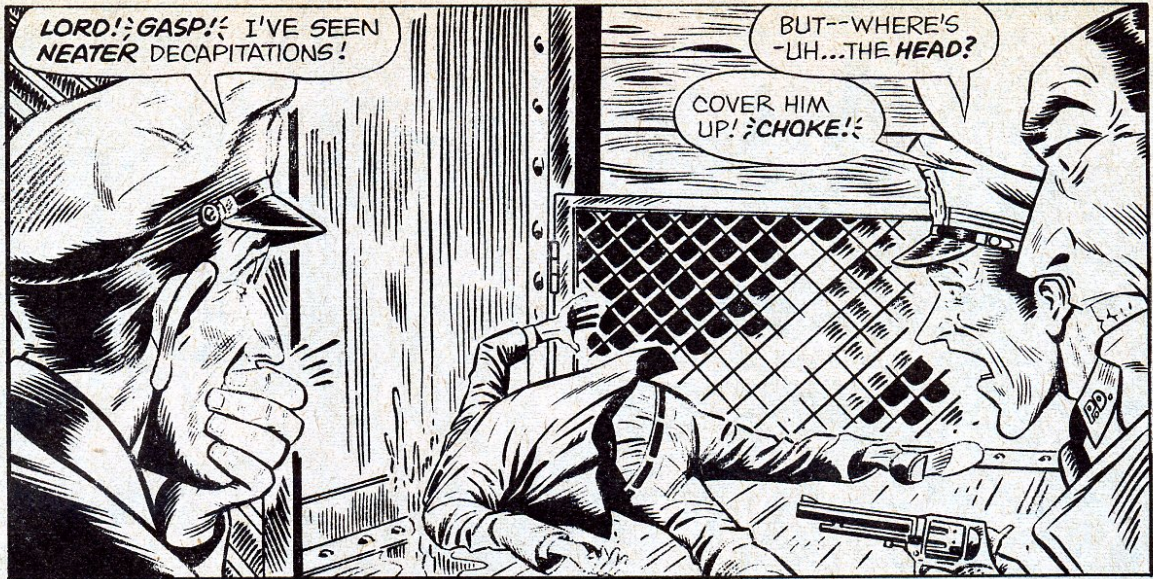








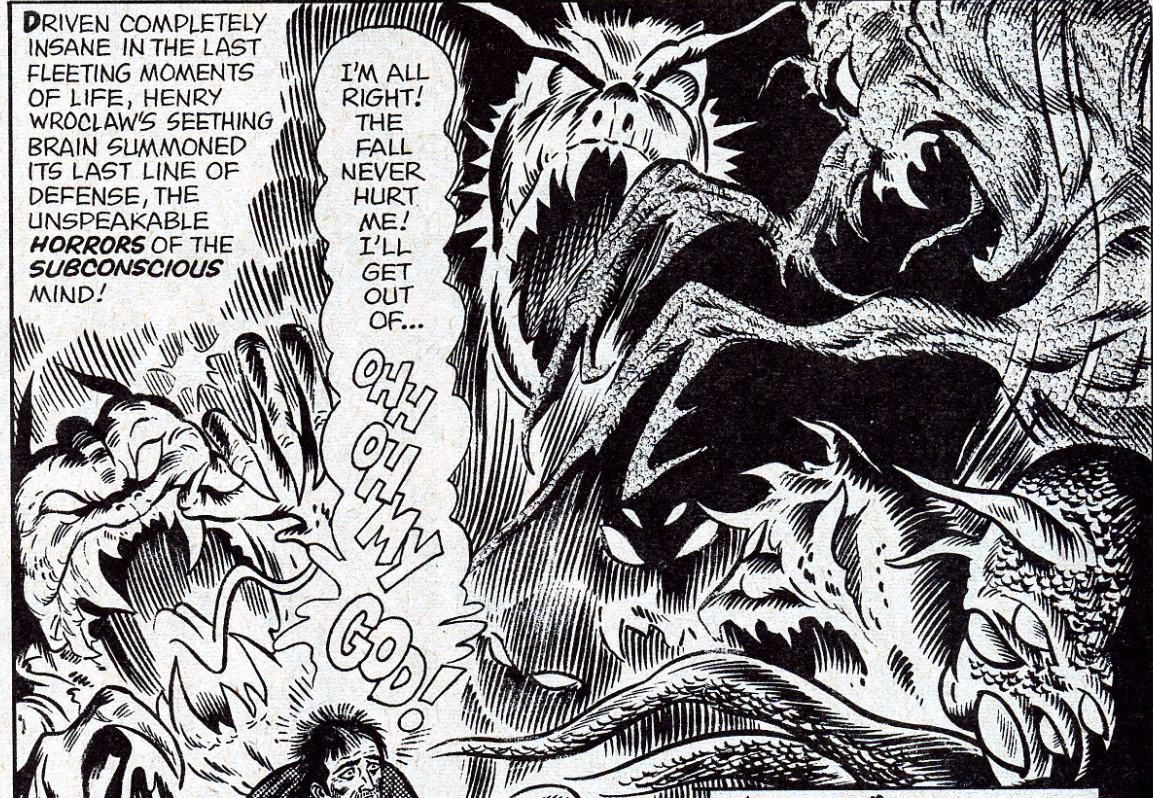




LORD! GASP! I'VE SEEN NEATER DECAPITATIONS!

BUT--WHERE'S -UH...THE HEAD?

COVER HIM UP! CHOKE!!



DRIVEN COMPLETELY INSANE IN THE LAST FLEETING MOMENTS OF LIFE, HENRY WROCLAW'S SEETHING BRAIN SUMMONED ITS LAST LINE OF DEFENSE, THE UNSPEAKABLE HORRORS OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND!

I'M ALL RIGHT! THE FALL NEVER HURT ME! I'LL GET OUT OF...

OH OH MY GOD!



AND WHO KNOWS HOW LONG THAT SUBCONSCIOUS, ONCE AROUSED CAN LIVE. VARGA KNOWS!



THE END



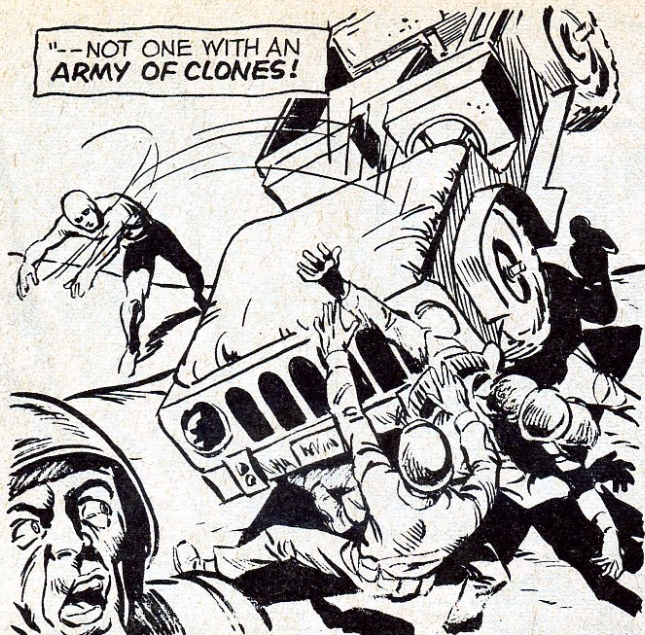
"CAN YOU *IMAGINE*, FRANK? AN ARMY OF INDESTRUCTIBLE, UNSTOPPABLE *CLONES*!..."

THE VICTIMS!

"...LUMBERING, *BRUTISH* CREATURES WITHOUT MINDS, ALL *ALIKE*, ALL WITH THE SAME TERRIBLE *POWER*...ALL WITH *ONE* DESIRE..."

"...TO KILL!"

"CAN YOU *IMAGINE*, FRANK? AND ALL BECAUSE OF *US*--OUR *TEAM*! TOGETHER, WE'VE MADE THE VERY *THOUGHT* OF WAR *IMPOSSIBLE*! NO ONE WILL EVER *DARE* ATTACK A COUNTRY AGAIN..."



"--NOT ONE WITH AN
ARMY OF CLONES!



ALL BECAUSE OF **OUR** WORK
--**OUR DISCOVERIES**, FRANK
...I WANT YOU TO KNOW--
HOW PROUD I AM...TO HAVE
TEAMED WITH YOU ON
THIS **PROJECT!**

NONSENSE.
IT WAS
YOUR IDEA...
YOUR PROCESSES
...I WAS JUST
WATER
BOY..



BUT WE DID IT TOGETHER.
THAT'S WHAT **COUNTS!**

THAT
TANK OF
NUTRIENT
MATERIALS...



...HOW LONG DID
WE **SLAVE** BEFORE
WE FOUND THE
RIGHT FORMULA?

FRANK?



**YOUR IDEAS--
YOUR PROCESSES!**

YOUR FAME!





AND SO, FRANK ROGERS, A PART OF IT ENDS--BUT ONLY A PART! YOUR MEMORY RECALLS OTHER INCIDENTS...OTHER BRIEF INSTANTS OF LIFE--AND OF YOUR NEVER DYING BITTERNESS!



REMEMBER THE DAY YOU **FIRST** MET TAD WILLIAMS? THE DAY YOU'D BECOME **ENGAGED** TO SUE?



FRANK, BABY! HEY, YOU'RE LOOKING REAL GOOD, BROTHER! THIS MUST BE THE LOVELY LADY, RIGHT? CONGRATULATIONS.

HEY, FRANK --YOU EVER MET THIS BRAIN-BOY? NAME OF TAD WILLIAMS --DOCTOR WILLIAMS?



I'VE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT YOUR **GENETIC RESEARCH!**

IT'S A PLEASURE TO KNOW YOU, DOCTOR.

YOU SAW IT IMMEDIATELY, AS YOU TALKED THAT NIGHT. YOU SAW IT IN **HIS** EYES... AND IN **HERS**. AND YOU BEGAN THEN...TO **HATE**...

YOU SEE... IT'S A SIMPLE PROCESS, REALLY...



...A BIT OF SKIN FROM A SUBJECT, AND UNDER THE RIGHT TREATMENT, THAT SKIN WILL GROW INTO AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF THE ORIGINAL ORGANISM!

FRANK, ISN'T THAT JUST FASCINATING?

YOU AGREED TO TAD'S OFFER OF PARTNERSHIP IN THE EXPERIMENT. YOU *KNEW* IT WAS ONLY AN EXCUSE FOR HIM TO SEE MORE OF SUE.

BUT...

FRANK!
FRANK!

IT'S WORKING!

THE CLONE'S COMING ALIVE!

TERRIBLY, DARLING.



THE STRAIN--
TOO MUCH FOR IT!

WHY ALL THE GLUM
FACES?

YOU TWO LOOK
LIKE CUSTOMERS
AT A MORGUE.

HELLO,
SUE!

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE
OFF FOR A FEW DAYS?
GET SOME REST.
HAVE FUN.

IT CERTAINLY
SEEMS LIKE A
GOOD IDEA. WHAT
DO YOU THINK,
FRANK?

I'LL STAY HERE. THERE ARE
SOME MORE TESTS I HAVE
TO RUN THROUGH.

ALL RIGHT, FRANK.
IF YOU WANT IT
THAT WAY...

WE'VE
FAILED,
FRANK...

JUST
ANOTHER
BAD DAY,
SUSAN. WE
SEEM TO BE
HAVING QUITE
A FEW

YOU
TWO GO
AHEAD!

I
WANT
IT THAT
WAY!



YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOURSELF! YOU STRIKE AGAIN AND AGAIN,
PULPING HER UPTURNED FACE, STRIKING AND STRIKING...UNTIL THE
BAR IN YOUR HAND IS STICKY WITH **BLOOD**...





GONE?

NOT
QUITE,
FRANK...

N-NO!



POOR,
POOR, FRANK.
YOU NEVER HAD
THE IMAGINATION
TO UNDERSTAND
JUST HOW
UTTERLY STUPID
YOU ARE!

CAN'T...
BE...

WHY
NOT? WE
SAW RIGHT
THROUGH YOUR
FOOLISH
ATTITUDE!

THE WORLD IS SPINNING
ABOUT YOU, THE ROOM ROCK-
ING UNDER YOUR FEET. YOU
HEAR TAD'S WORDS...AND
YOU HEAR **ANOTHER**
SOUND...



YOU **HEAR** IT...A SOUND LIKE THAT OF A
BOIL BREAKING, A SICKLY, **NAUSEOUS**
SOUND OF SOMETHING MASSIVE SLIDING
OUT OF FLUID...

IT WAS A
SIMPLE MATTER
TO MAKE **CLONES**
FOR THE TWO OF
US--AND LET YOU
DO THE REST!

THEY CAN'T **REALLY**
BE KILLED, YOU
KNOW. ESPECIALLY
NOT THE WAY YOU
TRIED TO DESTROY
THEM...



SSSLLGGGSSHH! HH!



MY
GOD.

MY
GOD!

...YOU ONLY
MADE THEM
MAD!

GGGCLLLRRSSSHHH

FOR A MOMENT, THERE IS
BLINDING BRILLIANCE, A
TERRIBLE SCREAMING PAIN...
AND IN THE NEXT INSTANT...
THERE IS ONLY **DEATH!**

MAN--OFTEN DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEEN BORN OF TWO FATHERS! THE FATHER KNOWN AS **NATURE**, THE UNIVERSE, LIFE AND...**LOVE!** AND THE FATHER KNOWN AS **HORROR**, NIGHT, BLACKNESS AND **DEATH!**

THE **VAMPIRE**...GAUNT AND EMACIATED IN HIS THIRSTING FOR HUMAN **BLOOD**, AND TREACHEROUS IN HIS TECHNIQUES OF **TRAPPING** HIS **VICTIMS**...IS OF THAT FATHER OF UNHEAVENLY ORIGIN! AND SO IT BE A FITTING MEMORY THIS TALE... THAT THE GROTESQUE **CREATURE-BAT** DIE A MERCILESS DEATH IN...

THE **TIME**: **ANCIENT ROME**...126 B.C. UNDER THE RULE OF GAIUS SEMPRONIUS GRACCHUS.

THE **SETTING**: THE GREAT ARENA... STADIUM OF MANY TRIALS OF COMBAT AND HONOR...NOW HOSTING THE ANNUAL CHARIOT RACE OF THE TRIBUNE'S FINEST HORSEMEN.

Vault of a Vampire

NIGHT HAS JUST FALLEN LIKE A SHROUD OVER THE THROGS OF SENATORS, TRIBUNES AND PEASANTS ALIKE. EACH MAN...IN EAGER AND EVER WATCHFUL EYE TO THE OUTCOME OF THE GREAT RACE...LIGHTS A FLAMING TORCH TO THROW VIOLENT SHADOWS ON THE PERSPIRING FACES OF THE PERFORMERS AS THEY DRIVE THEIR FEVERED HORSES AND BATTLE THEIR WAY AROUND THE CHURCH...



...DRIVING THEIR STEEDS AT A FRANTIC PACE AROUND A BEND! THE CROWDS SUDDENLY FALL QUIET AND A HUSH PERVADES THE ARENA AS A MAN LEAPS FROM THE HIGH WALL OF THE STADIUM AND LANDS WITH CRUSHING WEIGHT ON THE BACK OF THE LEAD RACER!

WITH MERCILESS AND UNREASONING STRENGTH THE ATTACKER BATTLES THE CHARIOTEER, KNOCKING FROM HIS GRASP THE REIGNS AND FORCING HIM TO HIS KNEES...

ARE YOU INSANE?...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?..

AND THEN SLOWLY...IT IS MADE CLEAR TO **THOUSANDS** GATHERED IN THE STANDS JUST WHAT IT REALLY IS THE ATTACKER IS AFTER...**BLOOD**. WARM, RICH, FLOWING BLOOD FROM THE JUGULAR VEIN OF HIS VICTIM...FOR THE CROWD REALIZES ONLY TOO LATE THAT THEY ARE WITNESSING BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES A HIDEOUS ACT OF **VAMPIRISM!** THEY ARE POWERLESS TO ACT, FROZEN AT THE BIZARRE SPECTACLE UNFOLDING BEFORE THEM...THAT OF THE VILE **CREATURE-BAT** OF LONG LOST LEGEND SINKING HIS LONG GLEAMING FANGS AND SUCKING DRY THE LIFE-GIVING BLOOD OF AN INNOCENT MAN...POWERLESS TO ACT...FOR EACH MAN IS STRICKEN WITH THE SHUD-DERING FEAR OF UTTER DIS-BELIEF!



HE ESCAPES...TO ARMS
MEN...HE **MUST NOT**
ESCAPE!



LOOK...THROUGH THE
ARCH...SHADOWS
FLICKERING BY OUR
TORCHES!

SLING A SHOT
AT HIM DAMON...
IN THE HOPE OF
STRIKING HIM
IN **FLIGHT!**



MISSED...THE
CREATURE ESCAPES
INTO THE BLACKNESS
OF NIGHT LIKE...
A **DEMON!**

AYE...BUT STILL...
LET US SEARCH IN THE
HOLLOW YONDER...LEST
HE SILENTLY HIDES
BEHIND SOME
DECEITFUL **ROCK!**



NOTHING...HE'S
RUN
INTO THE
FOREST!

WE'LL NOT FIND
HIM THERE...
TONIGHT...THE
MANY TREES
WOULD HIDE
HIM WELL!



TRUE...HE'S
DISAPPEARED...
BUT WE MUST
TAKE ACTION TO
PREVENT THIS
IN THE
FUTURE!

DAMON'S WORDS
HAVE GOOD **MEAN-**
ING MEN...THIS
CREATURE HAS
STUCK TOO OFTEN...
TOO SUDDENLY...TO
BE ALLOWED TO
CONTINUE!



AYE...THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME HE HAS STRUCK...
LAST MONTH IT WAS **GENERAL PROCCHIUS...** THE LAST
WEEK STUNNED **HUNDREDS** BY ATTACKING A YOUNG
WOMAN IN THE TRIBUNE'S OWN **HANGING GARDENS!**
WHERE WILL IT BE **NEXT...THE SENATE ITSELF?**



THAT **FIEND** IS
LIKELY TO SHOW
UP **ANYWHERE!**
BUT USUALLY, YOU
MIGHT NOTICE...
HE LIKES
CROWDS...

TRUE MARCUS...
HE MUST BE A
THRILL SEEKER...
OUT FOR **MORE** THAN
BLOOD ONLY...BUT
FOR **PERVERSE**
PLEASURE IN SEE-
ING **MISERY** IN
THE FACES OF
ONLOOKERS!

THEN WE MUST
BE **READY...** WE
MUST ATTEND EVERY
SOCIAL FUNCTION
WITHIN THE NEXT
FEW **WEEKS...** AND
WHEN THE MONSTER
ATTACKS...WE'LL
HAVE HIM!



IF HE'S HERE **TONIGHT** ...AT THE PARTY OF SENATOR GATTUS...HE SHOULD STRIKE BEFORE **LONG!**

THAT IS SO...BUT HE'S NOT BEEN HEARD OF IN **WEEKS**...DO YOU THINK HE STAYS IN **HIDING** ALL THIS TIME?

IT'S **POSSIBLE DAMON**... BUT STILL WE **MUST BE** READY...IF HE EVER... WHAT'S THAT NOISE...



HELP...

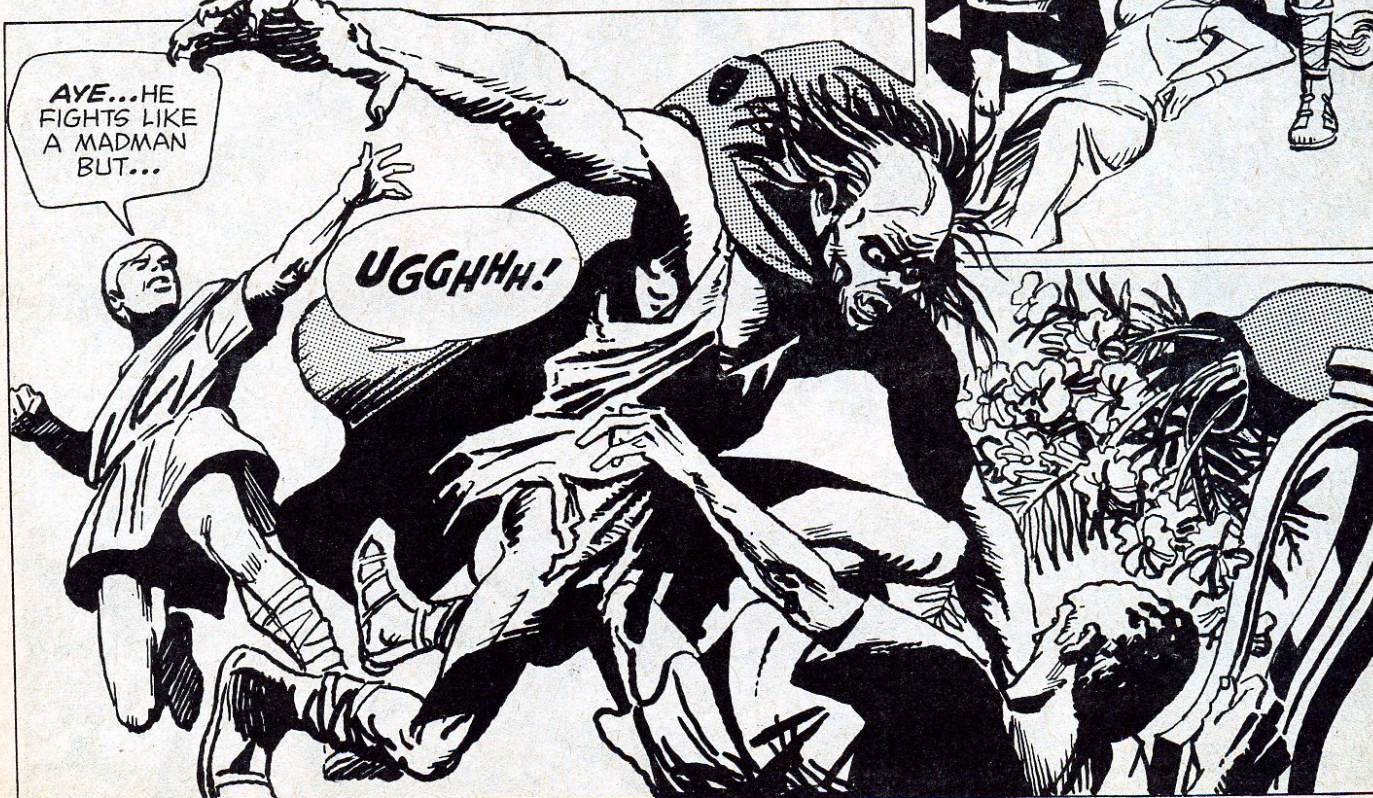
AAAAUUGH!!

GET AWAY... DARE YOU SEEK SUCH A BEAUTY AS YOUR **VICTIM?**

GET HIS **HEAD**... PULL AT HIS HEAD...HE'S AS STRONG AS AN **OX!**

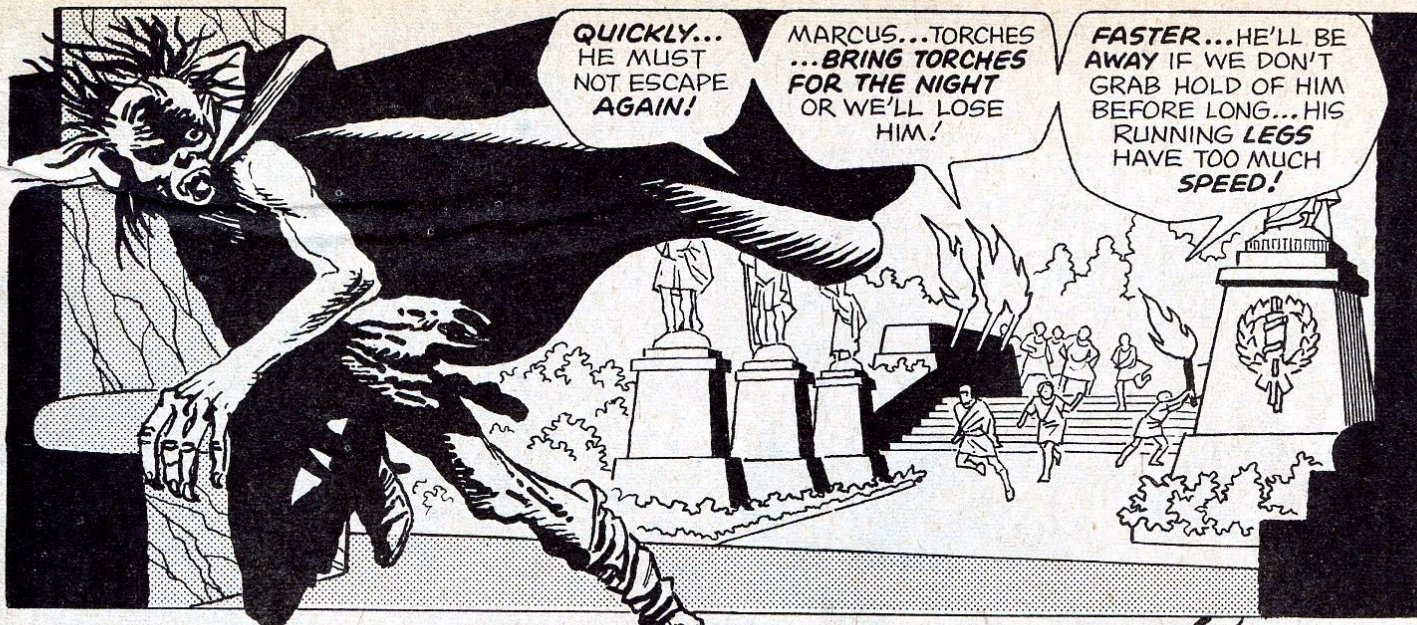


AGAIN THE VAMPIRE STRIKES...**AGAIN** HIS TEETH DIG DEEP INTO THE NECK OF A HELPLESS **VICTIM**-- THIS TIME, A YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL GIRL WHO **HAPPENED** TO CROSS HIS PATH-- AND SO ONCE AGAIN AN **INNOCENT** FALLS BEFORE THE TITANIC DEBAUCHERY OF THE CREATURE OF EVIL.



AYE...HE FIGHTS LIKE A MADMAN BUT...

UGGHHH!



QUICKLY...
HE MUST
NOT ESCAPE
AGAIN!

MARCUS...TORCHES
...BRING TORCHES
FOR THE NIGHT
OR WE'LL LOSE
HIM!

FASTER...HE'LL BE
AWAY IF WE DON'T
GRAB HOLD OF HIM
BEFORE LONG...HIS
RUNNING LEGS
HAVE TOO MUCH
SPEED!

AGAIN HE MAKES WAY INTO THE NIGHT...FOR
THERE IN THE DARKNESS AND MANY RUINS OF
AN EMPIRE WILL HE FIND ESCAPE...PERHAPS
...IF ONLY HIS PURSUERS WERE NOT TOO
DETERMINED ON HIS CAPTURE!

AND YET IT SEEMS THAT
THIS NIGHT THE FIEND
HAS BEEN CARELESS...
HIS BCRYPT--THE TOMB
OF HIS ETERNAL REST
IS CLOSE AT HAND TO
THE SCENE OF HIS UGLY
CRIME...AND BEING CHASED
HE HAS THOUGHTLESSLY
RETURNED TO HIS VAULT
WITHOUT THINKING...WITH-
OUT REALIZING HE HAS
LED HIS PURSUERS TO
HIS VERY FRONT DOOR...



LOOK...OVER
THERE...IN THE
FLEETING SHADOWS
...IS THAT NOT
HIM DESCENDING
INTO A VAULT?

IT MUST BE HIS!
THE FOOL...DOES
HE NOT REALIZE
HE HAS LED US TO
HIS VERY GRAVE?

FOOL IS RIGHT
...FOR BEFORE
LONG IT WILL
BE HIS GRAVE
FOREVER!

AYE...HE HAS INDEED TRAPPED
HIMSELF. FOR ALTHOUGH HE MUST
HAVE THE DOOR BOLTED ON THE IN-
SIDE...WE HAVE IT GUARDED
FROM THE OUTSIDE!

HE'LL NOT GET OUT
WITHOUT OUR KNOWING
...AND WHEN HE DOES
WE'LL BE ARMED...

MARCUS...RUN FOR
SILVER TIPPED
KNIVES AND SWORDS
...AND BRING FOOD,
TOO...WE'LL NOT
LEAVE THIS CRYPT
UNTIL HE HAS
EMERGED.

THAT SHOULD NOT BE
LONG...HE'LL HAVE NO
FOOD IN THERE...AND
SURELY HE CANNOT
SURVIVE LONG WITHOUT
IT...NOR WITHOUT HIS
THIRST FOR BLOOD!



AND SO STARTS A **VIGIL** FOR THE THREE **AVENGERS** OF SOCIETY...WAITING... WATCHING...FOR A **TERROR STRICKEN** BLOOD FIEND TO GIVE IN...TO ADMIT **DEFEAT** AND TAKE HIS **CHANCES** OUTSIDE! TO OPEN THE DOOR THAT BARS OUT **HATE** AND **REVENGE** FOR HE AND HIS KIND--OR...TO SUFFER A **FATE** PERHAPS WORSE THAN THAT OF A **VIOLENT** DEATH...THAT OF SLOW... PAINFUL...AGONIZING...**STARVATION** WITHIN!

HE MUST BE DEAD!

AYE--IT'S BEEN OVER TWO WEEKS...NO MAN, NO MAN CAN LIVE WITHOUT SUSTAINANCE FOR THIS LENGTH OF TIME...

WE'LL HAVE IT IN A FEW MOMENTS...

IT'S WELL BARRED FROM THE OTHER SIDE...AND THE WOOD IS THICK AND **HEAVY**...

BY THE ANCIENT GODS...

OH...IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY...WHAT HAS HAPPENED...WHAT HAS HE **DONE**?

WE'D BEST BREAK IN... IF HE'S NOT DEAD HE'LL BE VERY **WEAK**... IT WON'T BE MUCH OF A **FIGHT**!

HE'S STILL **STRONG**...BE READY...BE ON GUARD WITH YOUR **SWORDS**...

OH GODS... WHAT VILE MOCKERY OF A MAN IS THIS... THIS... **THING** BEFORE US?

WE CANNOT VIEW THE WRETCHED THING IN THIS UTTER DARKNESS!

BRING FORTH MORE LIGHT SO THAT WE CAN SEEK OUT THIS MENACE THAT AFFLICTS US!

VILE
CREATURE...
WHAT MANNER
OF BEAST CAN
YOU BE?

DIE GLADLY
WE RELEASE YOU
FROM YOUR SEMI-
HUMAN VESTMENTS
OF LIFE...

HIDEOUS...IS IT POSSIBLE...
CAN IT REALLY BE THAT MY
EYES DO NOT DECEIVE ME...
CAN IT ACTUALLY BE THAT
THIS...THIS BLOOD DEMON
HAS STAYED ALIVE BY...
DEVOURING HIS OWN
BODY...HIS OWN
HUMAN FLESH!

AND SO DEATH COMES
QUICKLY...PERHAPS FAR
TOO QUICKLY FOR HE WHO
HAS LIVED A LIFE OF
TERROR AND OUTRAGEOUS
ATROCITY...THE VAMPIRE...
GALINT AND EMACIATED IN
HIS THIRSTING FOR HUMAN
BLOOD...IS OF THAT FATHER
ON UNHEAVENLY ORIGIN...
AND SO IT BE IN FITTING
MEMORY THIS TALE...THAT
THE GROTESQUE CANNIBAL
DIE AN UNENVIABLE DEATH
IN...VAULT OF A VAMPIRE!

SERG
MOREN

STONE SPEAR IN HAND, KROOG THE HUNTER PAUSES IN AWE-STRUCK TERROR ATOP A STONEY RIDGE-- WIDE EYES STUDYING A SIGHT HE HAS NEVER BEFORE SEEN! A MASSIVE METAL BIRD COMES SAILING DOWN FROM THE SKY-- BELCHING FIRE AND SMOKE AND EMITTING A NOISE LIKE THUNDER! IS IT ANY WONDER KROOG STANDS PARALYSED?

GREAT *BIRD* FLY WITH SOUND OF *THUNDER*!

COME TO *EAT* KROOG, MAYBE!

WHEN THE DAWN GODS WAR!

GREAT *BIRD* FALLS!

I *KILL*! *FEED* MANY PEOPLE!

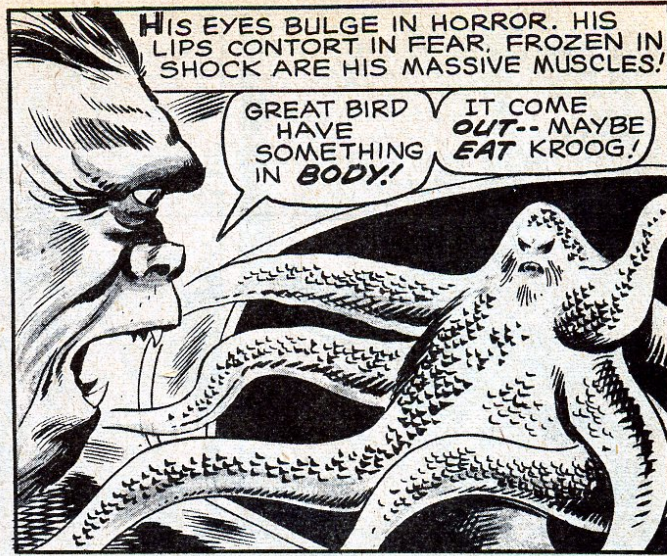
HE CASTS OFF HIS FRIGHT AND LEAPS FORWARD, BLOOD BUBBLING TO LIVE THAT HAS KEPT HIM AND HIS TRIBE ALIVE IN A PRIMITIVE WORLD...

THEN--UTTER HORROR SEIZES UPON THE CAVEMAN HUNTER AS...



HU! GREAT BIRD OPEN MOUTH TO SWALLOW KROOG!

NO LET BIRD DO KRUG RUN!

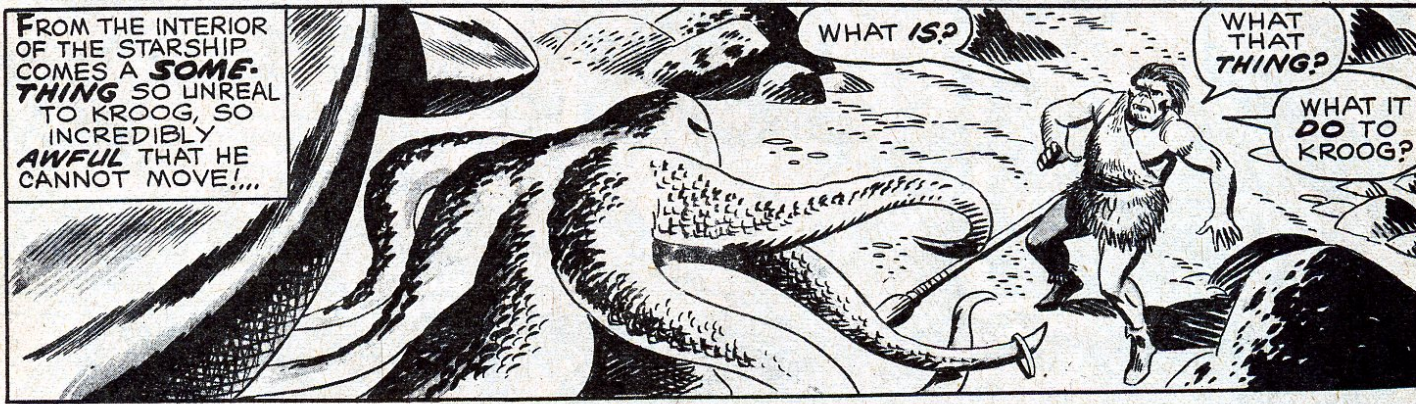


HIS EYES BULGE IN HORROR. HIS LIPS CONTORT IN FEAR. FROZEN IN SHOCK ARE HIS MASSIVE MUSCLES!

GREAT BIRD HAVE SOMETHING IN BODY!

IT COME OUT-- MAYBE EAT KROOG!

FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE STARSHIP COMES A **SOME-THING** SO UNREAL TO KROOG, SO INCREDIBLY **AWFUL** THAT HE CANNOT MOVE!...



WHAT IS?

WHAT THAT THING?

WHAT IT DO TO KROOG?



NO KILL KROOG!

KROOG SORRY! NOT MEAN AIM SPEAR AT GREAT ONE!

HIS KNEES SHAKE! HIS MUSCLES TURN TO WATER! HE DROPS GROUNDWARD...

RUBBERY TECTACLES SLIP A METAL BAND ABOUT KROGG'S HEAD. INSTEAD OF THE DEATH HE FEARS, UNDERSTANDING BURSTS INSIDE HIM...



CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME, KROOG?

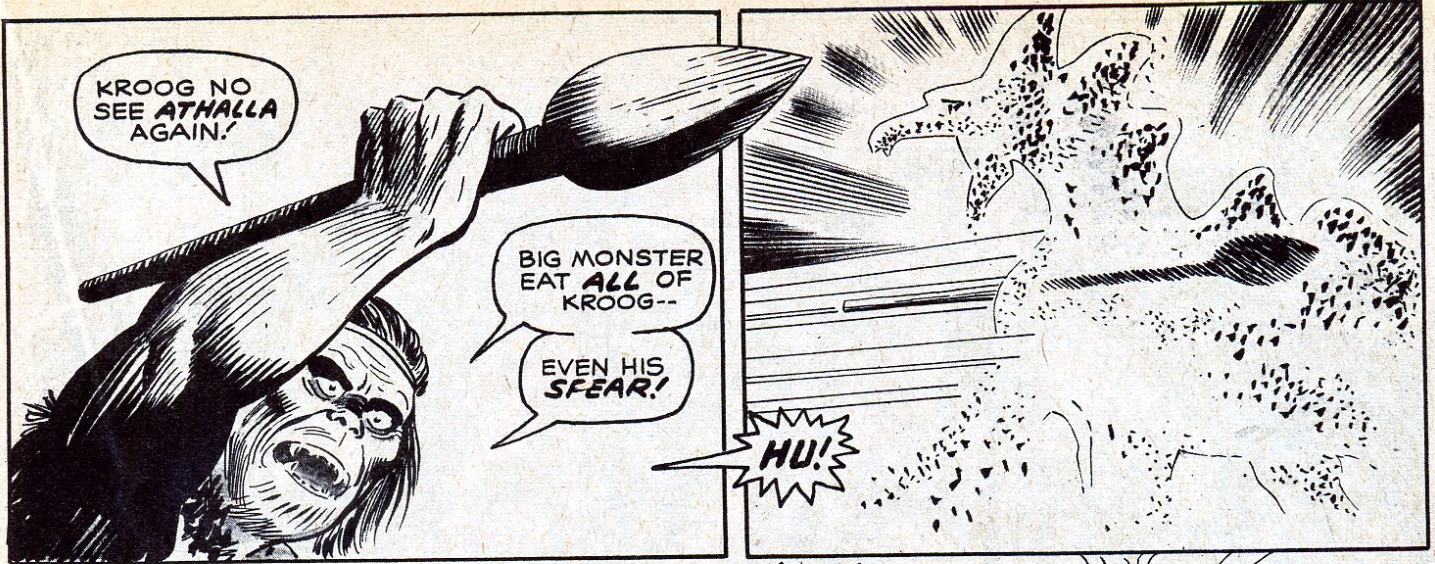
HU! KROOG HEAR VOICE INSIDE HEAD!

GREAT BEING SPEAK KROOG!

WE **THROPOLI** ARE AT WAR WITH CREATURES MUCH LIKE **YOURSELF**. KROOG, ONE OF THEM HAS **FLED** HERE TO YOUR LITTLE **PLANET** TO AVOID BEING **CAPTURED**! WE WANT YOU TO FIND HIM -- BRING HIM TO US FOR **KILLING**!







KROOG NO
SEE **ATHALLA**
AGAIN!

BIG MONSTER
EAT **ALL** OF
KROOG--

EVEN HIS
SFEAR!

HU!

THERE IS NOTHING
LEFT OF THE
DINOSAUR BUT
DRIFTING POWDER
AS...

WHAT
HAPPEN?

BIG MONSTER
JUST TURN
INTO **PUFF**
OF **SMOKE!**

BUT--
WHY?



HIDDEN IN THE DEEPS OF THE NEARBY FOREST
STANDS A STRANGER TO THIS PLANET-- WITH A
SMOKING RAYGUN IN A HAND...

THE **CAVEMAN** HAS
MET THE **THROPOLI**
TO JUDGE BY THE
TELEPATHY BAND
ABOUT HIS HEAD.

AND THE **THROPOLI** HAVE
ENLISTED HIM TO-- **FIND**
ME! WELL, I HAVE A
GAME OF MY OWN TO
PLAY!



SHAKING HIS HEAD IN DISBELIEF AT WHAT
HAS HAPPENED, KROOG RETURNS TO THE
COOKING FIRES OF HIS TRIBE...

KROOG! YOU GONE
LONG TIME!

STRANGE
THINGS
HAPPEN TO
KROOG!

KROOG
TELL
ATHALLA
ABOUT IT--
AFTER
EATING
TIME!



AS HE EATS A SLAB OF CRUDELY COOKED BISON STEAKS, THE CAVEMAN RELATES THE ODD EVENTS OF HIS UNUSUAL DAY...

SCALED **MONSTER** TURN INTO **SMOKE**! KROOG NOT KNOW **WHY**!

WHAT A GOOD GIFT. MAKE **ORNAMENT** FOR ME!



NO! WEAR BAND ON HEAD.

HELP KNOW THOUGHTS!

NOT ORNAMENT!



KROOG **RIGHT!** I HEAR DREAM-THOUGHTS OF DOG WHO CHASE DEER WHILE HE SLEEPS!

TOMORROW I GO FIND **ENEMY** OF CREATURE WHO GAVE BAND TO KROOG.

NOW I GO SLEEP. KROOG **TIRED!**



EARLY NEXT MORNING, EVEN BEFORE THE MISTS LEAVE THE GROUND, THE DAWN AGE HUNTSMAN IS TROTTLING ALONG A WOODLAND GAME TRAIL...



KROOG!

I AM THE **GOD-BEING** OF THIS PLANET!

HU! KROOG NOT KNOW **GOD-BEING** LIVE HERE!

HIS HEART BEATS FASTER AS THE KROOG STUDIES THE FAMILIAR FOREST EVEN AS HE LISTENS TO THAT UNFAMILIAR VOICE...

I MADE THE SCALEY MONSTER INTO **SMOKE** YESTERDAY TO SAVE YOUR **LIFE**. YOU MUST **OBEY** ME.

I AM **ALL POWERFUL** KROOG!

YOU SAVE MY **LIFE!**

YOU BE MY **GOD-BEING**.



THEN THIS IS WHAT YOU MUST **DO**...

KROOG **HEAR. KROOG DO!**



OBEDIENT TO THAT VOICE, THE HUNTER OF THE DAWN WORLD SEARCHES AMONG THE FOREST GLADES UNTIL...

SEE LEAVES WITH SPOTS. WHAT DO NOW?

GRIND UP THOSE LEAVES. PUT THE JUICE IN WATER AND IN FOOD YOU TAKE TO THE THROPOLI.

IT WILL KILL THEM!



KROOG NOT DO! STRANGE BEINGS GIVE GIFT OF METAL BAND!

KROOG NOT DO WHAT YOU SAY.

FROM TREETOP TO TREETOP FLASHES A JAGGED BLADE OF LIGHTNING!



HU!

A CLAP OF THUNDER DEAFENS THE HUNSMAN!...



GOD-BEING ANGRY! GOD-BEING YELL AT KROOG!

NEXT INSTANT HIS VERY SOUL IS STUNNED TO TERRIFIED DESPAIR AS...



GOD-BEING MAKE TREES BURN!

GOD-BEING MORE POWERFUL THAN ANYTHING!

FROM THE SKIES COMES A DRENCHING RAIN, PUTTING OUT THAT FIRE...



KROOG AFRAID OF GOD-BEING!

DO WHAT GOD-BEING SAYS!

SCALEY MONSTER MAY COME GET KROOG!

I SHALL PROTECT YOU.



GO IN PEACE, KROOG-- BUT DO NOT MENTION ME TO THE CREATURES FROM THE METAL BIRD!

WITH THE SPOTTED LEAVES IN HAND, THE CAVE MAN HUNTER RETURNS TO HIS COOKING FIRES WHERE...



YOU GRIND UP-- MAKE JUICE.

DO NOT DRINK JUICE --OR JUICE KILL!

GOD-BEING TELL KROOG ALL THIS.

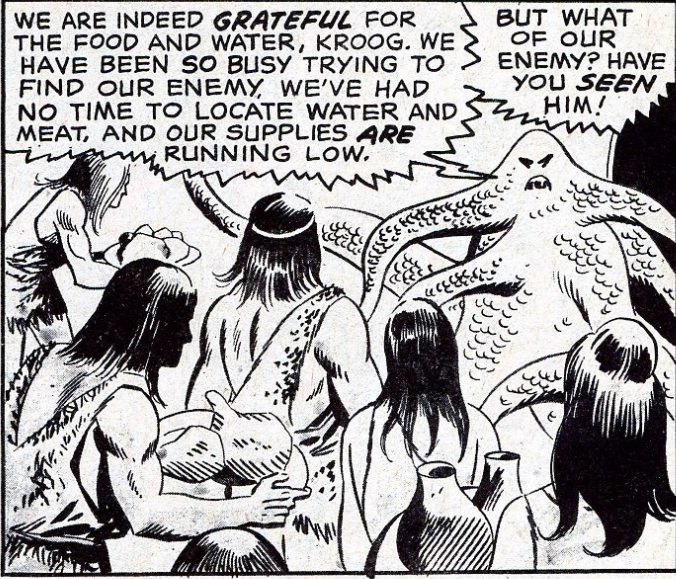
FOR HOURS ATHALLA WORKS. WHEN SHE IS DONE...



PUT POISON JUICE IN FOOD.

THEN WHOLE TRIBE TAKE FOOD TO THROPOLI ONES!

WHEN KROOG AND HIS FELLOW TRIBESMEN ARRIVE AT THE TROPOLI SPACESHIP...



WE ARE INDEED GRATEFUL FOR THE FOOD AND WATER, KROOG. WE HAVE BEEN SO BUSY TRYING TO FIND OUR ENEMY, WE'VE HAD NO TIME TO LOCATE WATER AND MEAT, AND OUR SUPPLIES ARE RUNNING LOW.

BUT WHAT OF OUR ENEMY? HAVE YOU SEEN HIM!

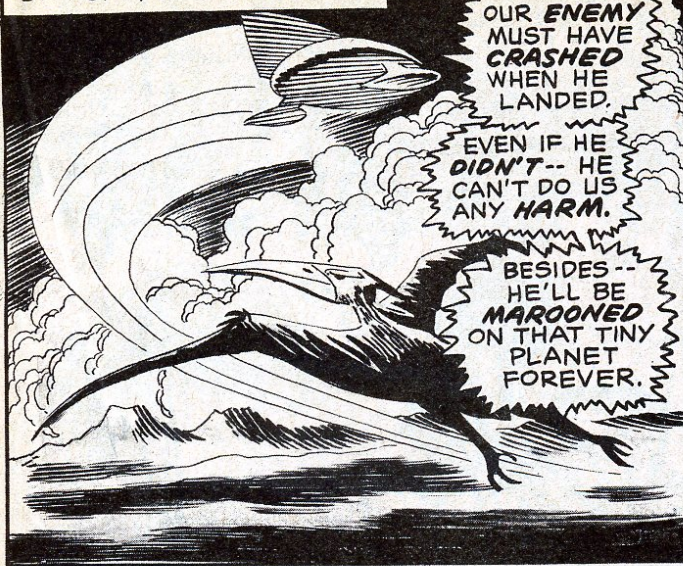
FOR A MOMENT, FEAR AND DREAD WAR INSIDE THE CAVE MAN HUNTER. HE TRIES TO SPEAK THE TRUTH AND LET THESE GOD-BEING DECIDE AMONG THEMSELVES THESE MATTERS WHICH KROOG DOES NOT UNDERSTAND...

KROOG NOT SEE MAN. KROOG SEE NOBODY-- NOT EVEN GOD!



POOR IGNORANT SAVAGE! I SUPPOSE HE SEE "GOD" IN EVERY BOLT OF LIGHTNING, IN EVERY PEAL OF THUNDER, BEHIND EVERY BUSH, IN EACH STREAM OF WATER!

THE FOOD AND WATER STORED ABOARD THE STARSHIP, IT TAKES OFF...



OUR **ENEMY** MUST HAVE **CRASHED** WHEN HE LANDED.

EVEN IF HE **DIDN'T**-- HE CAN'T DO US ANY **HARM**.

BESIDES-- HE'LL BE **MAROONED** ON THAT TINY PLANET FOREVER.

OTHER EYES WATCH THAT HEAVENS-BOUND FLIGHT...



THAT SHIP WON'T GET **FAR**. THE **THROPOLI** WILL **EAT** THE POISONED FOOD AND **DRINK** THE POISONED WATER, THEN--

-- THE **CONINE** DERIVED FROM THE **SPOTTED HEMLOCK LEAVES** I GAVE **KROOG** WILL--

--KILL THEM IN A MATTER OF **MINUTES!**

WITHOUT THE **THROPOLI** TO **CONTROL** ITS FLIGHT-- THEIR STARSHIP WILL BE ATTRACTED BY THE **SUN'S GRAVITY**--

-- AND **PLUNGE** INTO IT!

NOW I'D BETTER TAKE MY **ELECTRIC GENERATORS** OUT OF THESE TREES--

--OR **KROOG** MAY SEE THEM.



I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO DISCOVER THAT HIS **GOD-BEING** IS JUST A POOR **HUMAN** BEING LIKE HIMSELF.

OR THAT IT WAS A **SCIENTIFIC TRICK** THAT MADE THAT **LIGHTNING--** AND **THUNDER--** AND BROUGHT DOWN THE **RAIN**.



I'LL LET HIM GO ON THINKING I'M **GOD**.

UNTIL MY PEOPLE **FIND** ME-- IF THEY EVER **DO**.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, I THINK I'LL CALL **KROOG-- ADAM!**

AND NAME HIS WIFE-- **EVE!**

AFTER MY **FATHER** AND MY **MOTHER** ON MY **DISTANT HOME PLANET!**



THE END

A ROTTIN' DEAL



THE BROILING DESERT SUN BEAT DOWN RELENTLESSLY ON THE SMALL ENCAMPMENT TENT NESTLED SECURELY BESIDE THE SHIMMERING OASIS. WITHIN ITS CANVAS CONFINES THE OLD MAN'S VOICE BROKE THE HEAVY SILENCE OF THE WASTELANDS.



FELIX TOWNSEND PULLED THE HEAVY DESERT BOOTS ON WITH A GROAN AND ADDRESSED HIS YOUNG NEPHEW PETER WITH AN AGED SMILE...



ACCORDING TO THE MAP THAT OLD PROSPECTOR SOLD ME, THE MINE IS ABOUT FIVE DAYS JOURNEY FROM HERE!

YOU SENILE OLD GOAT. ANY FOOL KNOWS THAT "LOST MINE" ROUTINE IS THE OLDEST CON GAME IN THE WORLD...AND YOU PAID FIFTY BUCKS FOR THE MAP...

THE AGING UNCLE'S WRINKLED HAND OPENED HIS FIELD JACKET AND PATTED THE SHEATH OF PAPERS IN ITS LINING. HE NODDED AT PETER...

YOU'VE BEEN GOOD COMPANY TO AN OLD MAN THESE LAST FEW YEARS, PETER. I'M SHOWING MY APPRECIATION BY REMEMBERING YOU IN MY WILL!

MAP OF REGION

PETER STARED HUNGRILY AT THE PAPERS. HE'D WAITED MONTHS JUST TO HEAR THOSE WORDS. THE LONG HOURS OF BOREDOM WITH HIS UNCLE HAD PAID OFF...

OUR JOURNEY WILL BE MADE ON **FOOT**, PETER. THE TERRAIN IS TOO **ROUGH** FOR ANY VEHICLE.

THE WATER HOLES ARE **SPACED** ALMOST EXACTLY A **DAY APART**! WE HAVE **ONE** CANTEEN A PIECE. BE SURE TO **RATION** YOUR WATER ACCORDINGLY...

PETER HAD SHRUGGED IN AGREEMENT. HE FIGURED THE OLD MAN WOULDN'T LAST THREE HOURS IN THE SWELTERING HEAT AND WOULD ABANDON THE CRAZY SCHEME BEFORE THE DAY WAS OUT. BUT THE WITHERED DESERT RAT PROVED HEALTHIER THAN HIS NEPHEW HAD ANTICIPATED AND IT WAS PETER WHO STUMBLED TO HIS KNEES IN EXHAUSTION BY MID-AFTERNOON...

I'M **DYING**! HAVEN'T HAD A DRINK IN **THREE HOURS**... C-CAN'T MAKE IT!

GET UP, BOY! WE CAN'T STOP NOW! I TOLD YOU TO **CONSERVE** YOUR WATER...

THERE...UP AHEAD! IT'S THE **FIRST OASIS**!



SO IT WENT. AT THE END OF EACH SCORCHING DAY A SHIMMERING POOL OF LIFE-GIVING WATER LAY WAITING FOR THEIR THIRSTY BELLIES AND EMPTY CANTEENS. BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE THIRD OASIS, PETER'S PATIENCE AND STRENGTH WERE WEARING THIN...

WHY SHOULD I WAIT?
I'LL BE AN OLD MAN
MYSELF BY THE TIME HE
KICKS THE BUCKET. IF
I PLANNED IT **RIGHT**
IT WOULD LOOK LIKE
AN **ACCIDENT!**

IS THAT
YOU, NEPHEW--
UHHH!

WHO
ELSE YOU
STUPID OLD
FOOL!

PETER!
WHY?...

BECAUSE
I'M **TIRED**
OF WAITING,
UNCLE
FELIX!

HIS CANTEEN!

PETER STRUCK THEN, AGAIN
AND AGAIN WITH THE JAGGED
ROCK, UNTIL THE CLEAR DESERT
POOL MUDDIED CRIMSON AND
THE OLD MAN'S LIFE EBBED
AWAY IN A FEEBLE TRAIL OF
BUBBLES. A BRIGHT GLINT OF
METAL WINKED AT PETER FROM
BENEATH THE RIPPLING SURFACE.

PETER REACHED DOWN AND LIFTED THE
SHINY RECEPTACLE FROM THE QUIET FORM...

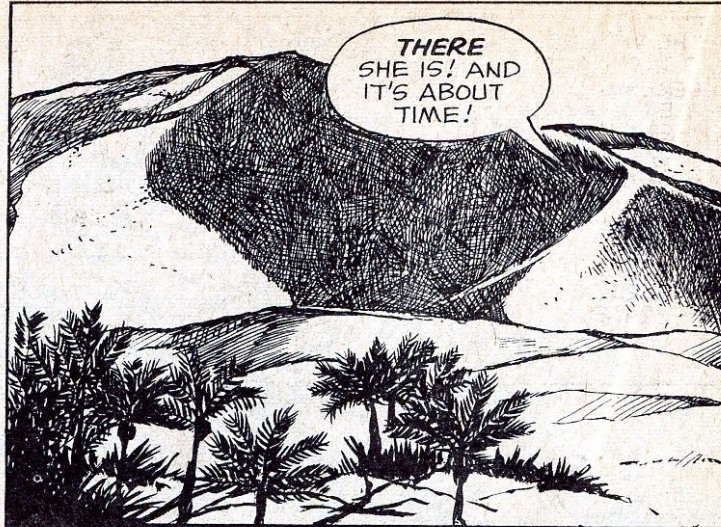
YOU WON'T **NEED** THIS NOW,
UNCLE, AND IT'LL MAKE THE
RETURN TRIP **TWICE** AS
EASY ON ME!

BY MID-AFTERNOON OF THE NEXT DAY PETER WAS GREEDILY EMPTYING HIS OWN CANTEEN INTO HIS DUSTY GULLET. IT SEEMED TWICE AS HOT NOW AS THE DAY BEFORE...

BLASTED HEAT! GOOD I'VE GOT PLENTY OF WATER!



THERE SHE IS! AND IT'S ABOUT TIME!

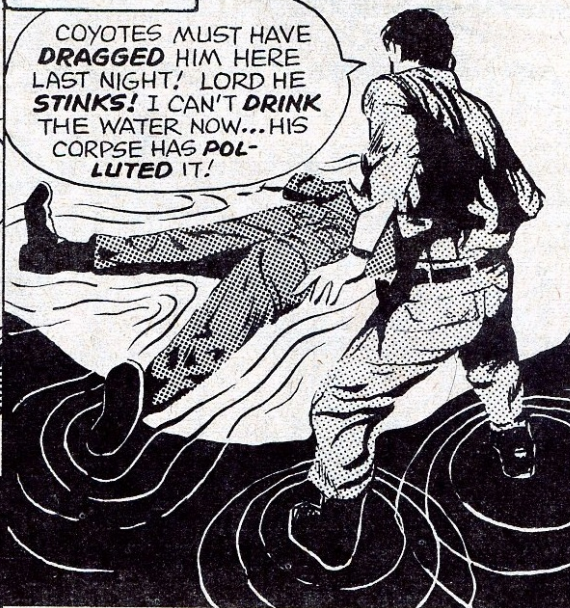


THE COOLING WATER HAD ALMOST TOUCHED HIS LIPS WHEN SOMETHING CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION FROM THE CENTER OF THE OASIS. THE BLOATED PULPY FIGURE BOBBED TO THE SURFACE AND STARED HIDEOUSLY AT HIM WITH SIGHTLESS EYES...PETER SCREAMED...

UNCLE FELIX! MY GOD! HOW IN THE NAME OF HADES DID HE GET HERE?



COYOTES MUST HAVE DRAGGED HIM HERE LAST NIGHT! LORD HE STINKS! I CAN'T DRINK THE WATER NOW...HIS CORPSE HAS POLLUTED IT!



I'VE STILL GOT HIS CANTEEN! I CAN MAKE IT ON THAT!...TRAVEL BY NIGHT! YOU OLD VULTURE... I'M NOT LIKED YET!



SO HE WALKED INTO THE FREEZING DESERT NIGHT, HIS UNCLE'S CANTEEN SWINGING BESIDE HIM. BY SUNRISE THE LAST OF THE PRECIOUS WATER HAD PASSED OVER HIS PARCHED LIPS ...HE SEARCHED THE HORIZON DESPERATELY!



THAT'S IT!
I'D BETTER BE
ON THE RIGHT
TRAIL!



THE OASIS!
THERE IT IS!



THE REEKING SLIME-COVERED HEAD FLOATED LAZILY IN THE WATER, ITS ROTTED FLESH FILLING THE DESERT AIR WITH STOMACH-CHURNING ODOR, TAINTING THE COOL LIQUID AROUND IT WITH PUTRESCENCE. PETER SHUDDERED, CHOKING BACK HIS VOMIT...

HIS HEAD BEGAN TO SWIM AS THE GROTESQUE FACE DANCED BEFORE HIM, GRINNING IDIOTICALLY...



THIS CAN'T
BE HAPPENING! I'M
GOING MAD FROM
THIRST! THAT'S IT!
HE'S A MIRAGE!

BUT INSIDE, HE KNEW THE HIDEOUS THING IN THE OASIS WAS AS REAL AS THE DUST ON HIS SWOLLEN TONGUE. HE WIPED THE SWEAT FROM HIS FOREHEAD WITH A SHAKING HAND AND TURNED BACK TOWARD THE DESERT...



GOT TO MAKE
IT TO THE LAST
WATER HOLE BEFORE
HE GETS THERE ...
GOT TO BEAT HIM!

WEAK WITH THIRST AND EXPOSURE, PETER STRUGGLED DESPERATELY FOR THE ENCAMPMENT TENT MILES AWAY AND THE FINAL OASIS BESIDE IT. MERCIFULLY THE SKY DARKENED, BLOTING OUT THE SUN. THEN TO HIS HORROR HE REALIZED IT WAS A...



SAND STORM!
I'LL BE BURIED
OUT HERE!

HE SQUINTED INTO THE HOWLING GALE AND DREW CLOSER TO THE STUMBLING FIGURE. FROM OUT OF THE SWIRLING STORM LOOMED THE HORRID MUTILATED FACE...

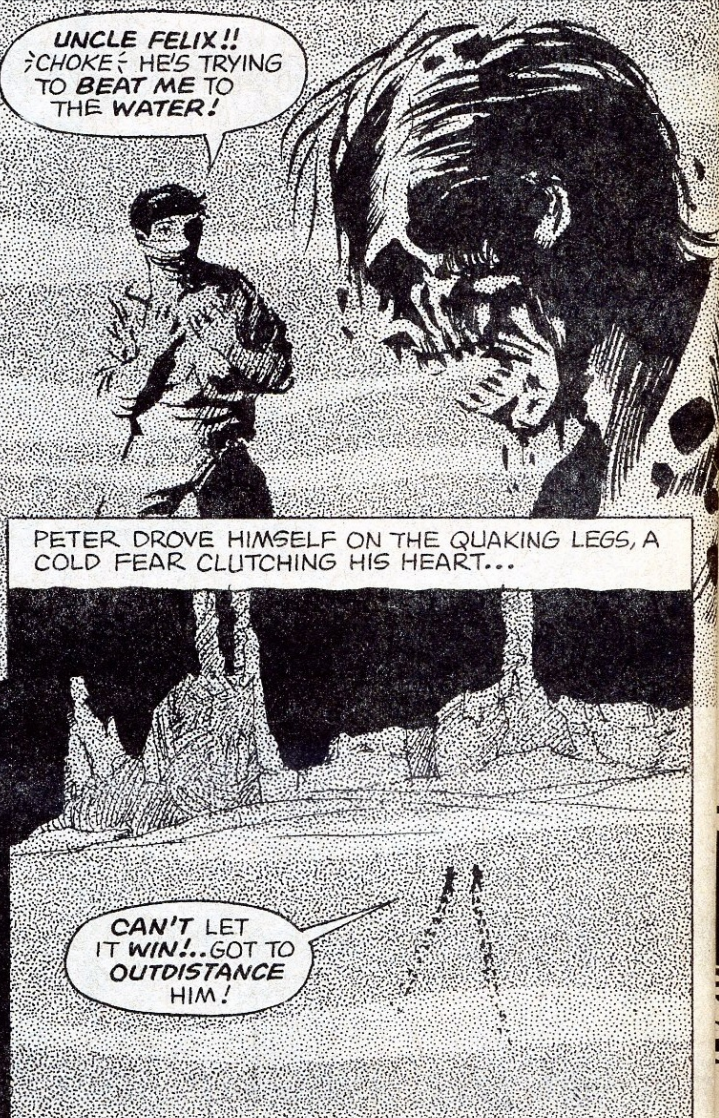
PETER FASTENED HIS BANDANA ABOUT HIS FACE AND PUSHED INTO THE BLINDING, WHIRLING SAND. IT WAS THEN HE NOTICED THE DIM SILHOUETTE MOVING ALONG BESIDE HIM...



**SOMEONE'S
OUT THERE!**

THE ROTTED TEETERING THING WAS KEEPING PACE WITH HIM, CHUNKS OF DECAYING FLESH AND MAGGOTY BONE FALLING FROM ITS STUMBLING HULK, LEAVING A TRAIL OF RANCID GORE BEHIND IT...

UNCLE FELIX!!
CHOKE! HE'S TRYING
TO BEAT ME TO
THE WATER!



PETER DROVE HIMSELF ON THE QUAKING LEGS, A COLD FEAR CLUTCHING HIS HEART...

**CAN'T LET
IT WIN!..GOT TO
OUTDISTANCE
HIM!**

SEEMINGLY YEARS LATER THE STORM ABATED. PETER, CRAWLING ON BLOODIED HANDS AND KNEES, GAZED ABOUT HIMSELF DELIRIOUSLY...

WAS IT AN HALLUCINATION?
DID I JUST IMAGINE--
WHAT'S THIS? TRACKS!
GOD, IT'S AHEAD
OF ME!

WITH A STRENGTH BORN OF MADNESS, PETER PUSHED UP AND HOBBLING AFTER THE GRISLY TRAIL LEFT BY THE THING. MILES LATER HE FOUND IT, TRUDGING RELENTLESSLY ON, FILLING THE ACRID AIR WITH ITS STENCH...

IT HASN'T REACHED
THE OASIS YET!

THE LAST OF HIS
WILL FADING, PETER
SCRAMBLED CRAZILY
ACROSS THE BURNING
SAND, PASSED THE
GRINNING HORROR,
AND FELL HEADLONG
INTO THE RELIEF-
GIVING POOL...

SCOOPING FRANTICALLY WITH TORN FINGERS HE FILLED HIS ACHING STOMACH WITH THE COOLING LIQUID UNTIL HIS GUTS BURNED AND LUNGS BEGGED FOR AIR... THEN HE LAY GIGGLING QUIETLY...

HEH-HEH-HEH!

THERE WAS A NOISE BEHIND HIM, SHUFFLING OF DRY DECAYED FEET. PETER TURNED IN TIME TO SEE THE CORPSE OF HIS UNCLE TOPPLE INTO THE OASIS...

HA-HA! I WON,
YOU BLOATED HORROR!
I'VE HAD MY DRINK
ALREADY...HEH-HEH...
I BEAT YOU!

REVIVED NOW, FLUSHED WITH VICTORY, PETER WALKED ON UNSTEADY LEGS TO THE SHADE OF THE TENT AND THREW OPEN THE FLAP. IT TOOK A MOMENT FOR HIS EYES TO ADJUST THEMSELVES TO THE DARKNESS WITHIN, THEN HE ENTERED...

WITH SHAKING FINGERS HE WITHDREW THE SHEATH OF PAPERS FROM THE OLD MAN'S JACKET AND OPENED IT...

AT LAST...
ALL MINE!...

WHA...THIS
ISN'T A WILL...
IT'S A MEDICAL
REPORT!

LAVERNE RESEARCH

MR. FELIX TOWNSEND
428 CHIPAWA LANE
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

DEAR MR. TOWNSEND:

THIS IS TO CONFIRM EARLIER PROGNOSIS OF
YOUR CONDITION. AFTER EXTENSIVE TEST
OUR FINDING INDICATE MARKED EVIDENCE
HANSEN'S DISEASE WHICH YOU CONTRACTED
SOME MONTHS AGO

LEPROSY!
HIS CANTEEN!
I...I DRANK
FROM HIS--

--C...CANTEEN...

AGGH-H-HH!

The END

HORROR MAN

He stared across the desk at me. Black unholy fear was in his eyes.

"You must do something for me! You must!" he screamed! This was Tracy Collins, the movie star. You remember him, the horror man of the screen. He played everything from werewolf to ghoul and had even won an Academy Award for his portrayal of the *Werewolf of Chicago*.

And here he was in my office screaming for help. He needed it all right, and it was my job as his doctor and his friend to help him. He was sick, very sick.

The fearful eyes stabbed at me again. "I change, Doctor. I change! Just like in the werewolf roles I played, only it's real. I become a wolf late at night and run on all fours. I howl at the moon, and I kill. I kill!" The terrified eyes pleaded, "Please, please have me locked up."

"All right now, Tracy." I tried to be calm. "I'll help you. I'll take you out to my own private rest home tonight. We can lock you up if you wish and observe you for a spell to check on these lycanthropic attacks of yours. Personally, Tracy, I think that you have just been working too hard and that this is nothing more than a temporary nervous condition."

Those terrible haunted eyes bored into me again as if to say, "You're a fool, Doctor, a stupid fool."

"I'm sure that with rest and care you'll be fine in a few weeks. Of course, Tracy, there'll be no publicity. We'll tell the studio that you went on a vacation. Doctor's orders and all that, you know."

Collins drummed his fingers on the arms of his chair. "I don't care if the public finds out what I am, as long as you lock me up. I don't want to change and kill again! I can't stand it!" He was

sobbing, and his huge frame was shaking horribly.

"Of we go then, old boy. My car is outside. We'll drive over to the rest home now."

We walked out to the car and got in. I drove slowly through the lighted city. This was no time for conversation. Enough had been said already, so I flipped on the car radio. Some rather happy music chimed out of it. He turned it off. I glanced over at him. He was breathing hard and wringing his hands, but those terrified eyes were staring straight ahead.

I pulled the car into the driveway of my private hospital, came to an easy stop and cut the engine. I snapped off the headlights.

"Well, Tracy," I said. "This place will be your home for a few weeks. You'll get a well-earned rest here, and then back to the studios for some more Academy Awards, eh?"

He said nothing. We got out and walked up to the front door. I opened it and motioned Collins in. He shuffled in staring straight ahead. I followed. Nelson, my chief attendant, was at the desk.

"Good evening, Doctor," he said. "Keeping kind of late hours, aren't you?" He smiled.

"Well, it isn't often that I come here in the middle of the night, but Mr. Collins is a friend of mine, and I suggested he be our guest for a short time."

Nelson walked over to greet Collins. "Glad to know you, Mr. Collins." He extended his hand, Collins ignored it.

"Say, Doctor," Nelson drawled. "I guess you'll want to give Mr. Collins a physical check-up first, just for the record, eh?"

"By all means, and remember Nelson, this is to be strictly confidential. No one is to know that Mr. Collins is our guest."

"Of course, sir. I'll call Moreno to take over the desk, and I'll

help you with the physical." He pressed the call button on the desk. Moreno came out and nodded to us.

"Everything all right, Moreno?" I asked.

"Fine and dandy, Doc. Everything's runnin' smooth."

Moreno was a good man. He had a way with mental patients.

Nelson, Collins and I adjourned to the examination room, and Moreno took over the desk. Inside the room I asked Collins to disrobe. He did so, slowly and nervously. Those terrible eyes still stared.

When he was completely nude he snarled fiercely at us and bolted for the door.

"Oh, oh!" cried Nelson.

I made a grab for Collins and missed.

"Stop him, Nelson!" I yelled.

Nelson jumped at Collins, but the movie star, with the superhuman strength of a madman, felled Nelson with one blow, and tore out the door.

Moreno had heard the commotion and was waiting for him. The front door was locked. Between the two of us we had a chance of subduing him. Snarling and slaving, a stark naked madman, he ran for the front door. He rattled at the knob growling and shrieking. The door held. Moreno jumped upon the crazed movie star's back and I came up from behind to help.

"For God's sake, grab hold, Doc!" Moreno panted. "I can't hold him forever!"

With another surge of strength Collins threw Moreno off his shoulders at me. We both went down in a heap.

Collins snarled again and looked through terrible burning eyes at us as we tried to get up. Then he looked around and saw the window. As we half crawled, half ran across the room after him, he

plunged through the window amid a shower of broken glass.

As we hurried to unlock the front door and race after him, we could hear him howling and shrieking across the hospital lawn. We dashed out the door. Now we could see the naked form of Collins running over the spacious moonlit grass. He hurdled the hedge fence and streaked into the road. A screech and a hiss of air brakes. A heartrending scream. Moreno and I ran to the road.

Collins' naked body lay crushed under the cab of a huge trailer truck. One of the front wheels had gone completely over his body. The truck driver was climbing shakily out of the cab.

"I couldn't help it. I couldn't help it!" he sobbed. "He ran right out in front of me!"

"It was an accident, I know." I tried to console the shaken driver. "Let's get his body off the road and call the police."

The driver and I dragged the mangled form of Tracy Collins to the grass near the hedge. Mor-

eno ran in and called the police.

"I think we'd better cover him with something," I suggested to the driver. "This is my hospital, and if a crowd gathers I wouldn't want a lot of talk going around about a naked madman being killed here."

"There's an old tarpaulin in the truck. I'll get it," the driver volunteered.

He brought the tarp, and we laid it over poor Collins' mangled body.

Moreno came back with Nelson, who seemed still groggy from that knockout punch.

"Cops will be here right away," Moreno grunted. He looked at the tarpaulin. "Ya covered him up, eh? Keep the nosey ones from lookin' at him and startin' bad rumors."

"Are you all right, Nelson?" I asked.

"Yeah, but what a wallop that boy packed! He should have been in the ring, not pictures, the poor devil."

The police came roaring up, the red light on the prow car blinking

like a huge evil eye. They slammed on the brakes, and a fat ruddy-faced deputy squeezed out of the car.

"What happened?" he asked.

I pointed to the tarpaulin. "The dead man under that canvas was a patient of mine. He ran out of my hospital and into the road. He was run over by this truck driver, but it was an accident, I assure you."

"Well, let's have a look at him."

Another officer was looking at the truck. The fat deputy shouted at him, "Call the morgue, Joe." The deputy walked over to the tarpaulin. "It may sound screwy to you, Doc, but I can't resist looking at these stiffies." He raised the tarp slightly and played his flashlight under the canvas. He dropped the tarpaulin back onto Collins' body and then stalked over to us with his hands belligerently placed on his hips. He glared at us angrily.

"And just what kind of a gag are you tryin' to pull here, Doc?" he barked. "That ain't no man under there. It's a big, ugly dead dog!"



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NIGHTMARE PIN UP

#2

FROM THE ANNALS
OF ONE OF OUR
FAVORITE GHOUL
CREATORS...

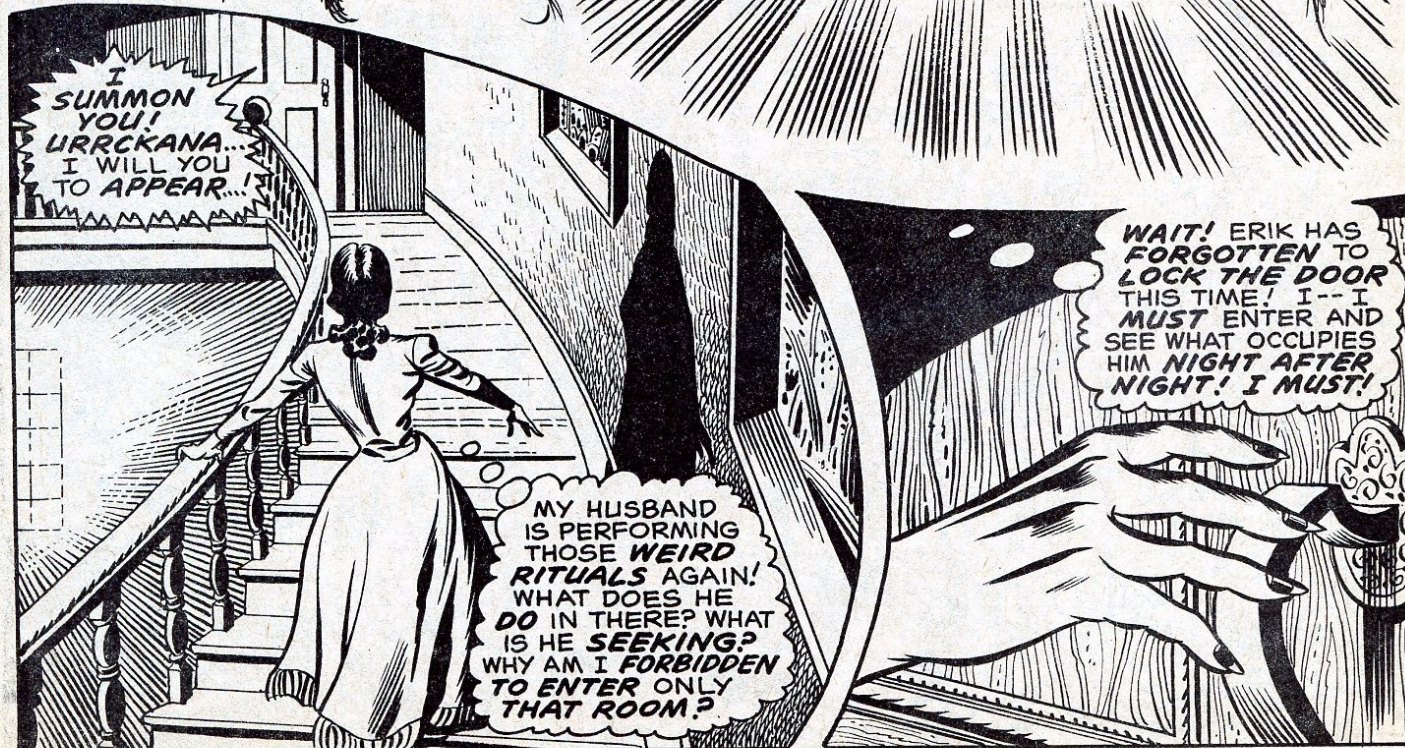
CHIC
STONE

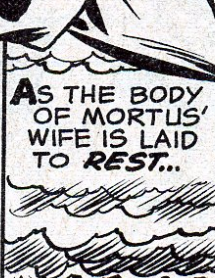


SOUL OF THE WARLOCK

WHAT EXISTS
AFTER... DEATH?
WHAT
MYSTERIOUS
UNFORESEEN
FATE AWAITS
THOSE WHO
EXIT THE WORLD
OF THE LIVING?
ERIK MORTUS,
BOTH GENIUS
AND MADMAN,
ATTEMPTS
TO LEARN THIS
SHROUDED
SECRET TO
QUENCH HIS
INSANE LUST
FOR POWER!
THROUGH HIS
STUDIES OF
THE BLACK
ARTS, AND BY
CONTACTING
THE SOUL OF
A SORCEROR
DEAD FOR 500
YEARS, HE SHALL
LEARN... TO HIS
UNENDING
HORROR!

ARCCALAS!
KEEPER OF THE
UNDEAD! METHOGLUS...
SOWER OF THE SEEDS
OF HATRED! BY THE
WILL OF MY MIND...
I SUMMON SPIRITS
FROM BEYOND
THE GRAVE!





ERIK MORTUS KNOWS HIS WIFE IS DEAD. THE RICH, CRIMSON STREAM OF BLOOD OOZING FROM HER SPLIT SKULL TELLS HIM THAT!



SUCH A YOUNG, LOVELY GIRL, ELISE!

IT IS A... HEAVY BURDEN TO BEAR! BETWEEN THIS AND MY OWN POOR HEALTH--

A PITY SHE SHOULD MEET WITH SUCH A TRAGIC ACCIDENT! I OFFER MY SINCEREST CONDOLENCES, ERIK!

--I MAY HAVE TO TAKE A HOLIDAY FROM MY PRACTISE FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME!



WHAT? I KNOW YOU CAN PROVIDE FOR YOURSELF WITH YOUR WEALTH, ERIK, BUT AS FOR THE WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY...

RAWLINS, WE HAVE BEEN FRIENDS FOR SOME TIME. PLEASE BE THE GUEST AT MY ESTATE FOR THE NIGHT!



NIGHT CLOAK'S
THE GLOOMY
COUNTRYSIDE AS
TWO PHYSICIANS
APPROACH THE
SECLUDED **MORTUS**
MANSION, A
DWELLING THAT
IS **IMMENSE...**
AND SOMEHOW
GROTESQUE
AND **EVIL!**

A **NICELY** FURNISHED
STUDY, ERIK! THIS
WINE IS EXCELLENT,
ALSO! BUT COME, WHAT
IMPORTANT **MATTER**
DID YOU SAY YOU WISHED
TO DISCUSS? SOMETHING
CONCERNING YOUR WIFE'S
DEATH?

GOOD LORD
MAN! DO YOU
MEAN CRYSTAL
BALLS, FORTUNE-
TELLING CARDS,
AND THE REST?

CHILDISH
ROT,
RAWLINS!
MY MEANS
ARE
SCIENTIFIC...

B-BUT THIS IS
INSANITY, MORTUS!
EVEN IF SUCH WAS
POSSIBLE, WHO IN
HIS **RIGHT MIND**
WOULD ALLOW
HIMSELF TO BE
INHABITED BY...

...OR HADN'T YOU
NOTICED THE ODD
TASTE OF YOUR
WINE?

...AND **ACCURATE!**
I BELIEVE A HUMAN
SUBJECT, OR **MEDIUM**,
CAN BE PREPARED TO
HOUSE THE **SOUL** OF
A BEING PLUCKED
FROM **LIMBO...**

...THE **DIMENSION**
OF THE **DEAD!**

...GOD KNOWS
WHAT KIND OF
CREATURE!
WHERE COULD
YOU **FIND A**
SUBJECT?

NO! A MUCH MORE
VITAL SUBJECT THAN
ELISE! A **PROJECT**
OF MINE WHICH WILL
GRANT ME **UNLIMITED**
POWER!--

COMMUNICATION
WITH THE
DEAD!

I **ALREADY**
HAVE,
DOCTOR!

MORTUS!
Y-YOU'VE...
DRUGGED
...ME!
OHhhh...!

IT IS FORTUNATE
YOU DO NOT HAVE
A **FAMILY,**
RAWLINS! FEW
SHALL BE OVERLY
DISTURBED WHEN
YOU... **COMPLETELY**
DISAPPEAR!

...UHHHH! WHERE AM...? **HEAVENS!** WHAT IS THIS PLACE? **ERIK!** WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

I'M PLEASED YOU HAVE **AWAKENED**, RAWLINS! YOU MUST BE **FULLY** CONSCIOUS FOR YOUR PART IN MY **EXPERIMENT!** MY MOST **ADVANCED** ONE YET! WHICH IS WHY WE ARE NOW IN A SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER OF **MY OWN DESIGN!**

TELL ME... HAVE YOU HEARD OF A MAN NAMED... **ESTABAN DELGATO?**

DELGATO? AN INFAMOUS SPANISH NOBLEMAN OF THE 14th CENTURY, CONDEMNED TO **DEATH** FOR PERPETRATING **HIDEOUS** CRIMES OF **BLACK MAGIC** AND **SORCERY!**

HE WAS THE **GREATEST** SORCEROR, OR **WARLOCK**, WHO EVER LIVED! DELGATO HAD MASTERED THE **BLACK ARTS!** HE COULD HAVE BECOME THE MOST **POWERFUL** MAN WHO EVER WALKED THE **EARTH!**

MY LONG **STUDIES** OF HIM BEAR THIS OUT! BUT **FANATICS** EXECUTED HIM **PREMATURELY!**

ABRUPTLY KNEELING, MORTUS INSCRIBES BIZARRE SIGNS UPON THE FLOOR OUTSIDE THE CHALK CIRCLE SURROUNDING THE **TERRIFIED DOCTOR!**

NOW WE **BEGIN!** THE **SOUL** OF ESTABAN DELGATO SHALL **LIVE** AGAIN, DOCTOR! THROUGH **YOUR BODY!**

MORTUS! THIS IS **MADNESS!** **INHUMAN!** RELEASE ME... I BEG OF YOU...!

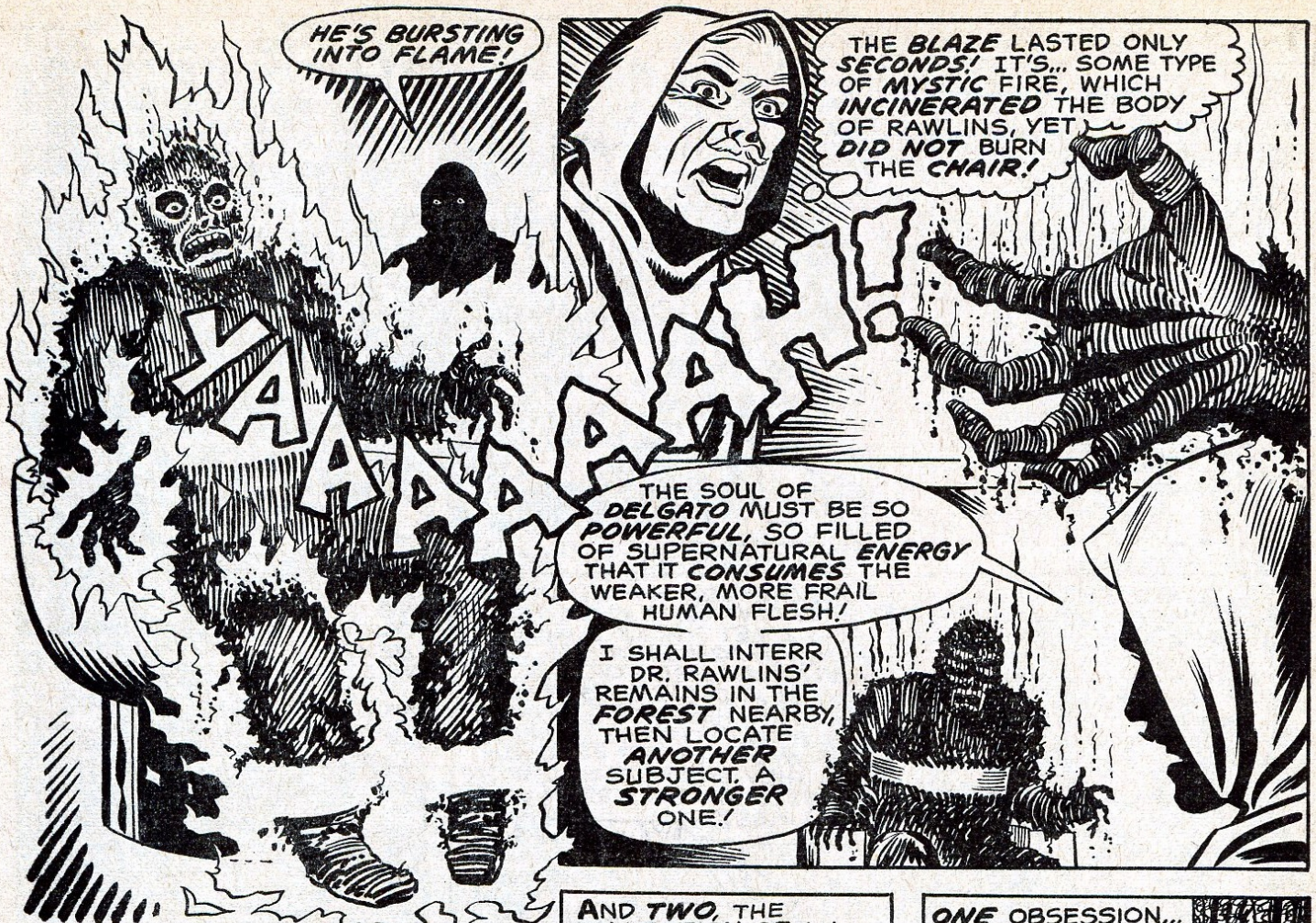
I NOW START THE **MYSTIC RITES!**

MORTUS! MY MIND... MY SOUL... WILL BE **DESTROYED** IF DELGATO ENTERS! **STOP!**

MY GOD! THAT SCREAM! CAN... THAT **GHOSTLY** FACE BE **DELGATO'S?** **WAIT!** THE ODOR OF SOMETHING **BURNING...**!

ESTABAN DELGATO! HEAR ME! BY THE NAME OF **ZORR**, KEEPER OF **FOREVER...** IN THE NAME OF **ETERNUS**, LORD OF **BLOOD** AND **DISSENTION...** BY **YTURBIN**, AND THE SPECTRE OF **DEATH!** I SUMMON YOU FOR YOUR **NEW BODY! COME!**

AAAAA



HE'S BURSTING INTO FLAME!

THE BLAZE LASTED ONLY SECONDS! IT'S... SOME TYPE OF MYSTIC FIRE, WHICH INCINERATED THE BODY OF RAWLINS, YET DID NOT BURN THE CHAIR!

THE SOUL OF DELGATO MUST BE SO POWERFUL, SO FILLED OF SUPERNATURAL ENERGY THAT IT CONSUMES THE WEAKER, MORE FRAIL HUMAN FLESH!

I SHALL INTERR DR. RAWLINS' REMAINS IN THE FOREST NEARBY, THEN LOCATE ANOTHER SUBJECT, A STRONGER ONE!

IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOW, ERIK MORTUS PURSUES TWO INTERESTS! ONE, THE CONQUEST OF A SCORE OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN...

AHHH, DENISE! HOW EXQUISITE, HOW RAVISHING YOU LOOK! YOUR BEAUTY SETS MY VERY HEART AFIRE!

YOU ARE ALWAYS PUNCTUAL, ERIK, AND ALWAYS WITH PRETTY WORDS! NOW...



...WHAT EXPENSIVE GIFT HAVE YOU BOUGHT ME THIS TIME?

AND TWO, THE COLLECTION OF AN UNWILLING SUCCESSION OF "MEDIUMS"... IN REALTY, VICTIMS!

I PRAY THAT THIS FOOL'S BODY SHALL BE THE ONE TO SUCCEED!



ONE OBSESSION... DECEPTIVE!

DARLING! YOU THRILL ME AS NO WOMAN EVER HAS! YOU'RE ALL I'VE EVER DARED DREAM FOR! GRANT ME THE TREASURE OF YOUR TOTAL LOVE!

YOUR NIMBLE TONGUE DOES NOT FOOL ME, ERIK MORTUS! I'VE HEARD HOW YOU BETRAY ALL YOUR WOMEN! STILL YOU, AND YOUR WEALTH, FASCINATE ME...



THE OTHER... DEADLY!

HELP ME! I
FEEL SO **WARM!**
HORRIBLY WARM!

IT'S HAPPENING
AGAIN! DELGATO'S
SOUL IS **BURNING**
THE **WEAK,**
HUMAN BODY!

NO! THAT'S
THE **SEVENTH**
"SUBJECT" I'VE
USED! **NONE**
OF THEM **DO!**
THEY JUST
BURN! BURN!!

...AND **STRANGE**
THINGS HAVE
BEEN WHISPERED
OF YOU, ERIK!
SOME OF THE
VILLAGERS
CLAIM YOU
PERFORM **UNHOLY**
RITEs WITHIN
THAT ISOLATED
RETREAT OF
YOURS!

KNOWING
ME, WHAT
YOU
THINK,
ALICIA?

RUBBISH! YOU ARE NOT OUT OF
THE **ORDINARY** AT ALL! IN FACT,
TODAY I MET A **VERY** STRANGE
MAN! **ANTON LEFARGE**, THE
CONTRVERSIAL FORTUNE-
TELLER AND **SPIRITIST!** HE
HAS LEFT HIS NATIVE **FRANCE**
FOR A TOUR OF THE **WORLD!**
HE'S **RIGHT HERE** IN TOWN,
AND THEY SAY HE CAN SUMMON
GHOSTLY SPIRITS FROM ANY-
ONE'S **PAST!**

UNN... **YES** I
HAD HEARD
OF THE MAN!
MUST ALL BE
TRICKERY,
OF COURSE!

ANTON LEFARGE! A **TRUE**
MEDIUM! ONE **USED** TO
CONTACTING **SPIRITS** FROM
BEYOND THE GRAVE! HE
WILL **DO!** YES... HE WILL
DO!

TWO DAYS LATER, AS DARKNESS MANTLES
THE MORTUS MANSION...

DO YE **WISH**
ME T' RETURN
FOR YE, MISTER
LEFARGE?

NO NEED, MON
AMI! M'SIEU MORTUS
'AS PROMISED TO
PROVIDE **ADEQUATE**
TRANSPORTATION FOR
ME, ONCE WE 'AVE
FINISHED OUR
BUSINESS!

M'SIUS MORTUS?
I RECEIVED YOUR
URGENT MESSAGE!
YOU WISH TO SEE ME
ON A MATTER
CONCERNING THE
SUPERNATURAL,
YES?

INDEED!
PLEASE COME UP
TO MY **STUDY,**
WHERE WE MAY
DISCUSS THIS
FURTHER!

ANTON LEFARGE WILL **RECALL** MORTUS' FRIENDLY MANNER, A WELL- STYLED **STUDY**, AND A FINE VINTAGE OF **WINE!** AFTER THAT, HE SHALL REALIZE HE IS AWAKENING TO A **NIGHTMARE!**

UNNNH!
S-SACRE!
WHERE
AM I?
WH-WHAT
HAPPENED
TO ME?

YOU WERE
DRUGGED, MY
FRIEND! WELCOME
BACK TO THE
LAND OF THE
LIVING! WE
HAVE AN
EXPERIMENT
TO CONDUCT!

MY EXPERIMENT
REQUIRES THE
PRESENCE OF AN
EXPERT MEDIUM!
YOUR BODY SHALL
HOUSE THE **SOUL**
OF A WARLOCK DEAD
FOR **500 YEARS!**
A **SOUL** THAT WILL
NEST WITHIN
YOUR **FLESH** AND
GIVE ME THE SECRETS
TO **ABSOLUTE**
POWER!

NO! EVEN I DO
NOT ATTEMPT
SUCH! MY **SOUL**
SHALL BE
DESTROYED IN
THE PROCESS!
STOP, M'SIEU,
STOP!

THEN... THE RITUAL COMMENCES!

I **BECKON**
YOU! FOR YOUR
NEW SHELL!

THAT DECAYED
HEAD AGAIN!
AM I
SUCCESSING!?

NOOOOOO...

YAAAH!

AT LAST! DELGATO'S
SPIRIT, HIS **IMMORTAL**
SOUL... MERGING WITH
A HUMAN BODY! BUT...
UGH! LEFARGE'S FACE
HAS BECOME
DELGATO'S!

ESTABAN DELGATO!
I KNOW YOU CAN
UNDERSTAND ME!
SWEAR THAT YOU
SHALL **NOT HARM**
ME, OR I'LL **KILL**
YOUR HOST WITH
THIS DAGGER!

STAY YOUR HAND!
I **SWEAR** I SHALL
NOT HARM YOU.

NOW, I COMMAND YOU TO
GIVE ME YOUR **WISDOM!** I WISH
THE SECRETS OF **ALCHEMY**,
CONTROLLING MEN'S MINDS,
FORETELLING THE FUTURE,
UNLIMITED WEALTH... ALL
YOUR OCCULT KNOWLEDGE! I
DEMAND **ABSOLUTE POWER**,
FOR I AM HE WHO RETURNED
YOU TO **LIFE!**

PRESUMPTUOUS FOOL! ARE
YOU SO CERTAIN THAT I **WANT**
LIFE? DID YOU NEVER **THINK**
THAT I MIGHT CRAVE THE
PEACE AND ETERNAL REST
AWAY FROM AN EXISTENCE
WHERE I WAS **SCORNE**,
PERSECUTED, AND
PHYSICALLY TORTURED?



A SCENE OF **UTTER HORROR** SHOCKS MORTUS' EYES AND NUMBS HIS **BRAIN!** **SEVEN CORPSES**, DRIPPING FRESH DIRT AND **BURNED BEYOND BELIEF**, ENTER THE CHAMBER!

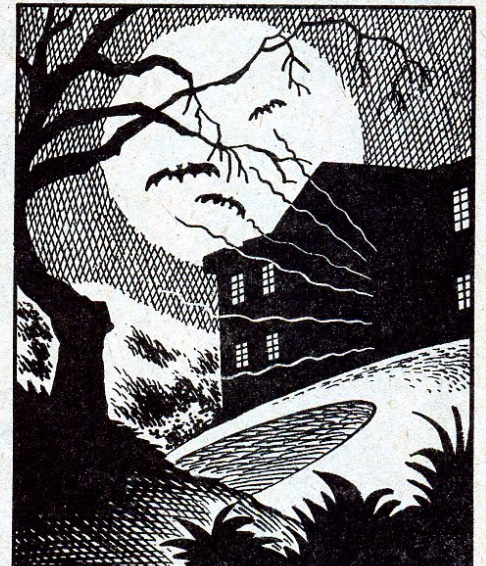


AND I SHALL **HONOR** THAT PROMISE! IT IS **THESE POOR SOULS** WHO CRAVE **REVENGE!** YOU SHALL RECEIVE THE **SAME SENTENCE** I DID FOR **SORCERY!** THEY SHALL TORTURE YOU TO **DEATH!** **UNIMAGINABLY!** **FAREWELL...** HA... HA... HA...!

DON'T LEAVE ME, DELGATO! PLEASE... HELP ME! HELP MEEE!



THE FRENCHMAN'S BODY **BURSTS INTO FLAME**, AS DELGATO RELEASES HIMSELF AND RETURNS TO **LIMBO!** AND AS IF UPON **SIGNAL** **SEVEN ROTTING, NAUSEATING CORPSES** BEGIN A **RITUAL OF HORROR** ALL THEIR OWN!



...AND AN **AWFUL** SUCCESSION OF **UNINTERRUPTED SCREAMS** COME FROM THE **GLOOMY, CLIFFSIDE MANOR!** SCREAMS WHICH SEEM TO GO ON AND ON AND ON... **THE END!**

BEWARE SMALL EVILS!



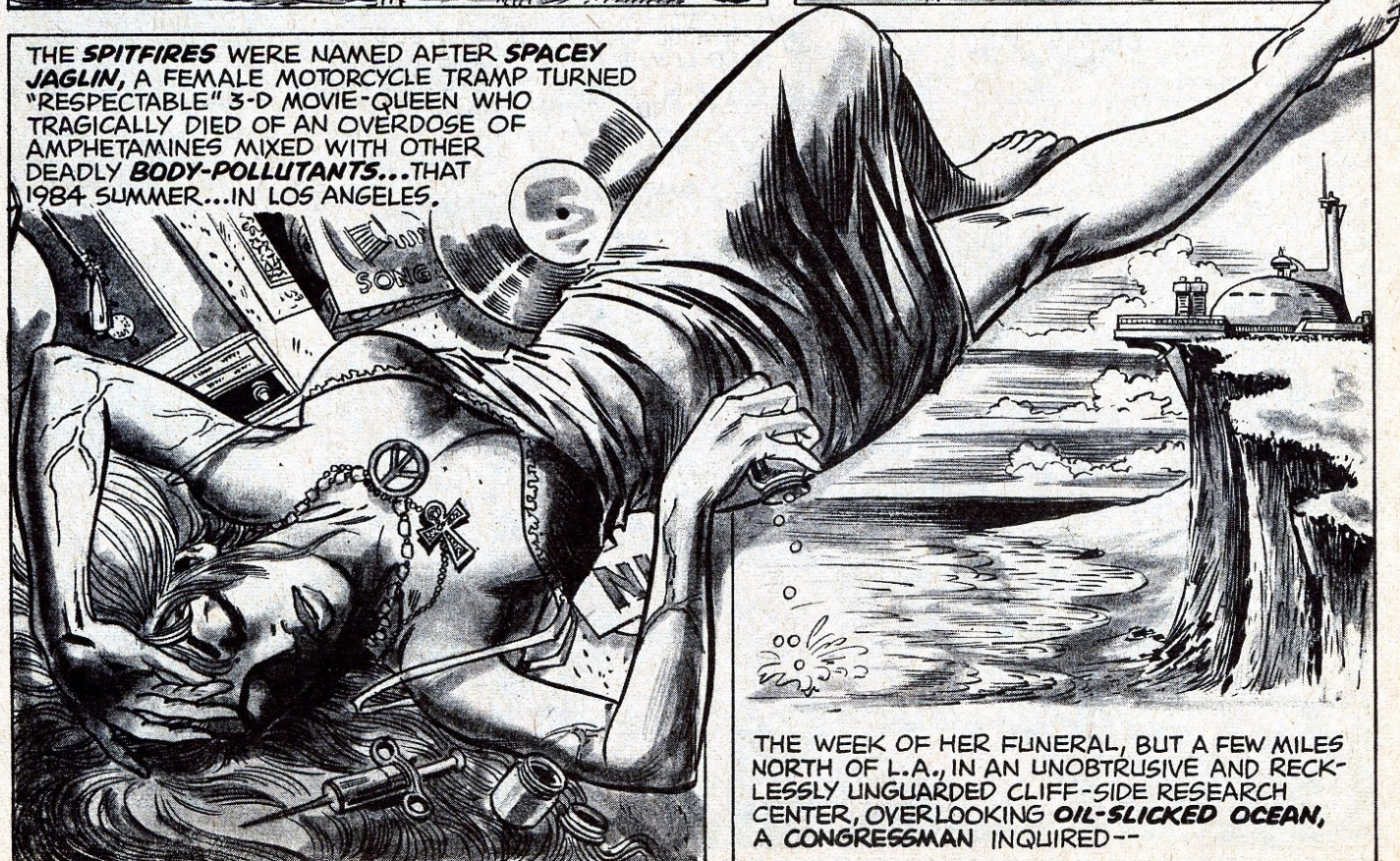
TO THOSE WHO SURVIVED TO THE YEAR 1983, SUMMER WAS FULL OF THE USUAL MADNESS, AND THE LETHAL TOLL OF **SMALL EVILS** MOUNTED--AS DID CLOUDS OF CAR EXHAUST, INDUSTRIAL POISONS AND STAGNANT WATER TO STRANGLE EARTH'S FRAGILE **ECOLOGY**... MAKING PURE AIR AND WATER SCARCE...



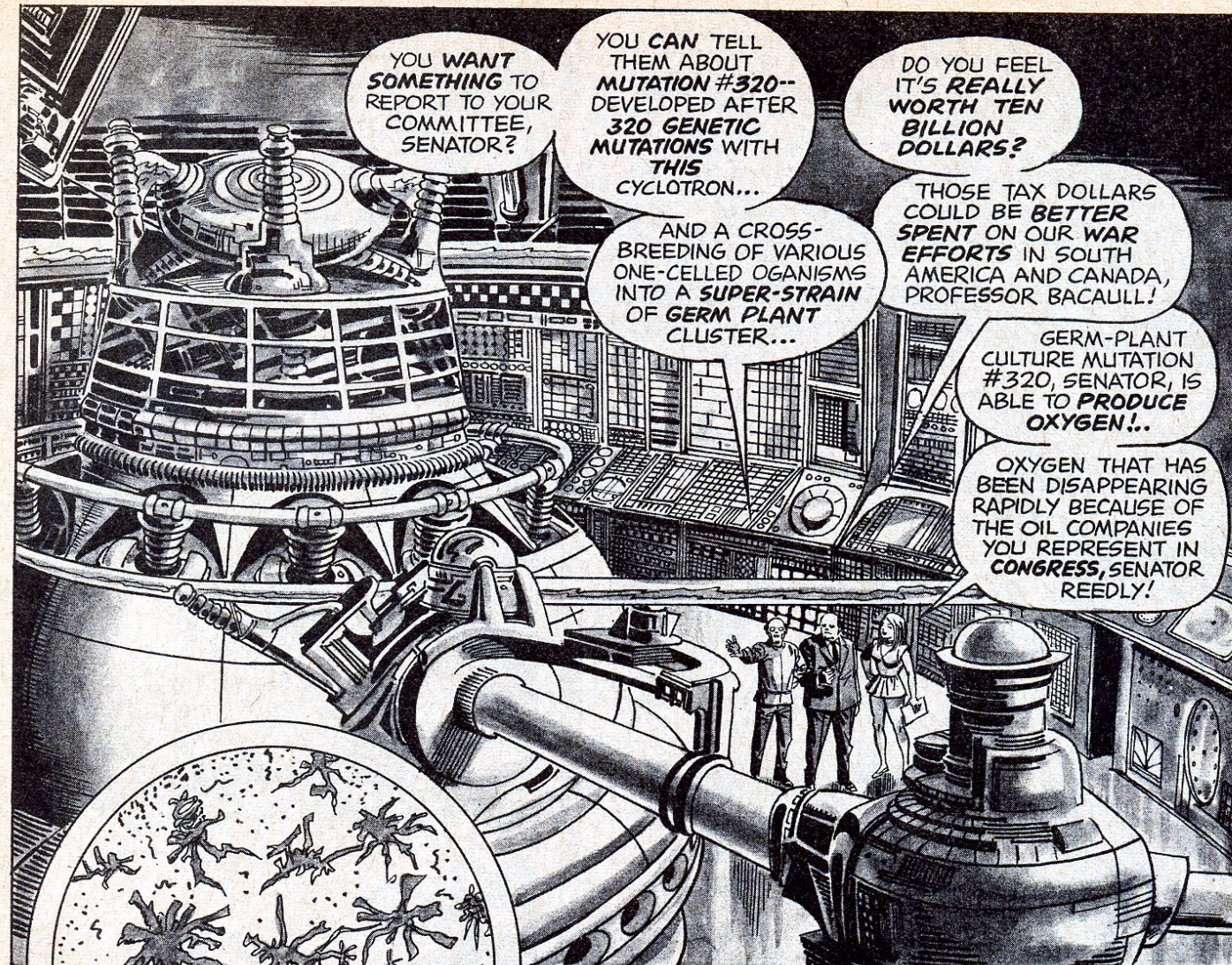
SUMMER 1983 SAW MUCH OF MAN'S **MISUSED** TECHNOLOGY COLLAPSE IN UPON ITSELF, AND A CIVILIZED PEOPLE BECOME DESPONDENT WITH THE ADVENT OF CRUEL, ANARCHISTIC, **BARBARIAN YOUTHS**, SUCH AS "**SPACEY'S SPITFIRES**"--A HUGE MULTI-ETHNIC TERRORIST HOODLUM GANG WHICH TOOK OVER SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.



THE **SPITFIRES** WERE NAMED AFTER **SPACEY JAGLIN**, A FEMALE MOTORCYCLE TRAMP TURNED "RESPECTABLE" 3-D MOVIE-QUEEN WHO TRAGICALLY DIED OF AN OVERDOSE OF AMPHETAMINES MIXED WITH OTHER DEADLY **BODY-POLLUTANTS**... THAT 1984 SUMMER... IN LOS ANGELES.



THE WEEK OF HER FUNERAL, BUT A FEW MILES NORTH OF L.A., IN AN UNOBTRUSIVE AND RECKLESSLY UNGUARDED CLIFF-SIDE RESEARCH CENTER, OVERLOOKING **OIL-SLICKED OCEAN**, A CONGRESSMAN INQUIRED--



YOU WANT
SOMETHING TO
REPORT TO YOUR
COMMITTEE,
SENATOR?

YOU CAN TELL
THEM ABOUT
MUTATION #320--
DEVELOPED AFTER
320 GENETIC
MUTATIONS WITH
THIS
CYCLOTRON...

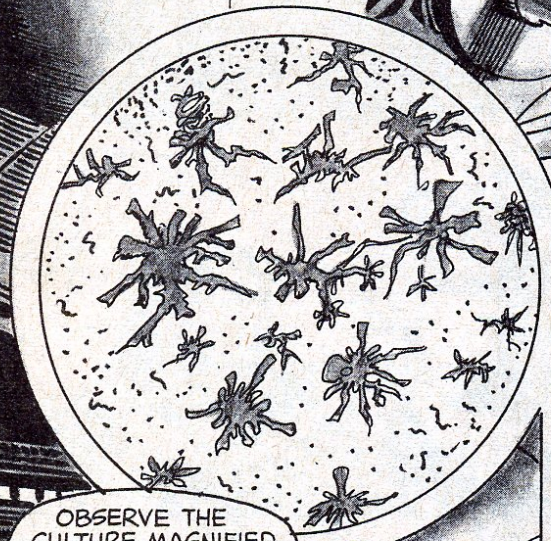
DO YOU FEEL
IT'S **REALLY**
WORTH TEN
BILLION
DOLLARS?

AND A CROSS-
BREEDING OF VARIOUS
ONE-CELLED ORGANISMS
INTO A **SUPER-STRAIN**
OF **GERM PLANT**
CLUSTER...

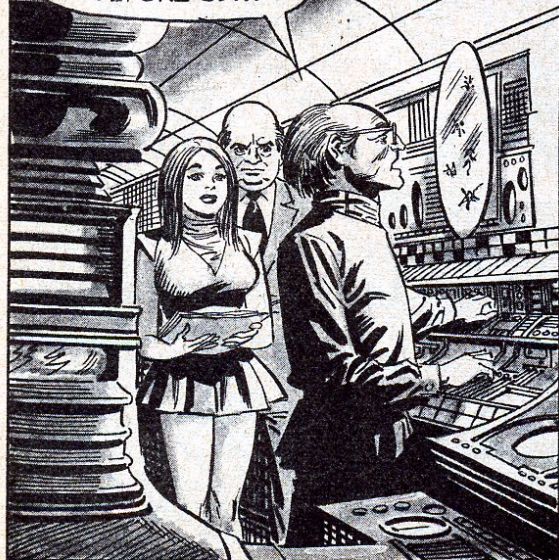
THOSE TAX DOLLARS
COULD BE **BETTER**
SPENT ON OUR WAR
EFFORTS IN SOUTH
AMERICA AND CANADA,
PROFESSOR BACAULL!

GERM-PLANT
CULTURE **MUTATION**
#320, SENATOR, IS
ABLE TO PRODUCE
OXYGEN!..

OXYGEN THAT HAS
BEEN DISAPPEARING
RAPIDLY BECAUSE OF
THE OIL COMPANIES
YOU REPRESENT IN
CONGRESS, SENATOR
REEDLY!



OBSERVE THE
CULTURE MAGNIFIED
ON THE VIEW SCREEN
BEFORE US...



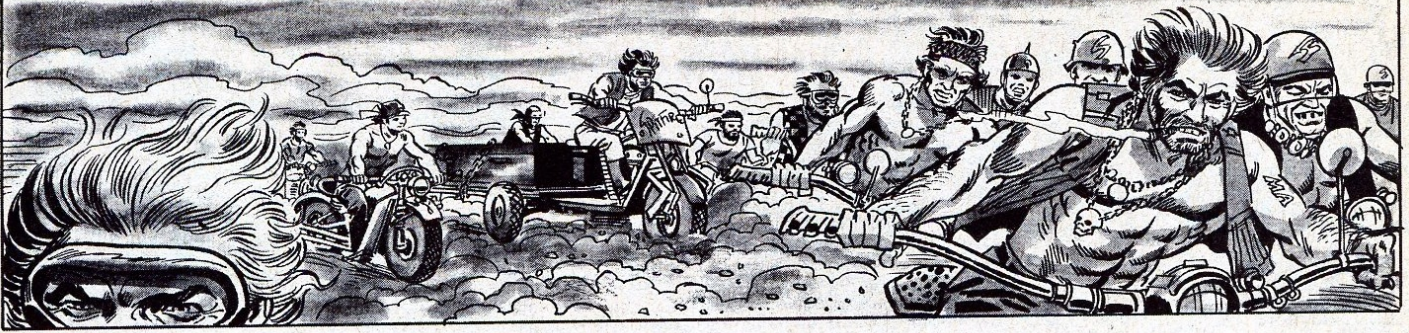
THE ODD CROSS-
BRED COMBINATION
OF ONE-CELLED
PLANT AND ANIMAL
LIFE YOU SEE,
SENATOR...

MAY JUST SAVE
THE HUMAN
SPECIES FROM
EXTINCTION! IT
WILL PRODUCE
OXYGEN ENOUGH
FOR ALL--

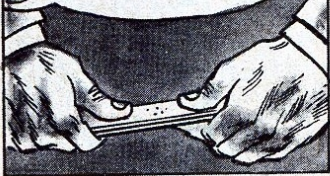
WHEN
PERFECTED!

BIKERS
ATTEND THE
MOMENTOUS
FUNERAL
OF
SPACEY
JAGLIN
WEDNESD
\$5 adm

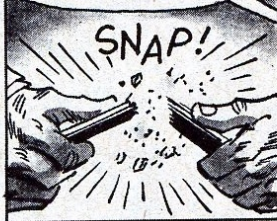
ALONG THE SMOGGY SEASCAPE, FESTIVE AND BARBARIC LEGIONS OF **SPACEY'S SPITFIRES** RIDE, SPEWING CARBON MONOXIDE EXHAUST CLOUDS THAT HALF-HID THEIR GRIM TOW--THE COFFIN-CYCLE OF SPACEY JAGLIN...



PROFESSOR, DO YOU **REALIZE** THE **MILLIONS** THAT CAN BE MADE FROM THIS DEVELOPMENT?



UH, PLEASE DON'T **GRAB** THE **SLIDE**, SENA-- UHH?--



IT'S NOT FULLY DEVELOPED! AT THIS STAGE OF MUTATION--



IT'S **PARASITIC!**



AAIEEEEE!



THOUGH THE **MUTATION #320** DOES PRODUCE **OXYGEN**, SENATOR REEDLY, IT ALSO DEVOURS LIVING PLANT AND ANIMAL TISSUES! IT **EATS** PEOPLE'S **FLESH!**

FOR GOD'S **SAKE!**-- DON'T STAND THERE-- **HELP** HIM!



WE HAVE FOUND, HOWEVER, THAT COMMON HOUSEHOLD DETERGENT, ODDLY ENOUGH CAN, DESTROY IT...



THE **SAME DETERGENT** THAT 15 YEARS AGO DESTROYED OXYGEN-PRODUCING **PLANKTON**--IN THE OCEAN-- AND FORCED US TO DEVELOP **MUTATION #320**.



HMM... "**MR. ENZYME**"-- YOU OWN THAT SOAP COMPANY, DON'T YOU, SENATOR?

HEY-- BUM **WHEELIE**, EH, BABY?! SPUN LIKE A WHITE **TORNADO!** YOU OK?

YEH, BROTHER! SAW A HOSPITAL BACK THERE-- I'LL GET THE KNEE PATCHED-- CATCH YA AT THE **FUNERAL!**

LATER!





NOW IF YOU CAN HOLD YOUR CURIOSITY IN CHECK, PROFESSOR, I'LL LET YOU WITNESS HOW WE MUTATE THE STRAIN--

ER-- YOU CAN CONTROL YOURSELF?--

YES--YES-- ALL RIGHT! BUT --MY HAND!



MISS SCHIFF, WOULD YOU PLEASE BRING IN ANOTHER CULTURE-SLIDE OF MUTATION #320--

AND--AH--A FIRST AID KIT?

YES, SIR!



WHILE IN THE OUTER OFFICES...

P-PLEASE S-SIR!--

DAMN IT! DON'T GIVE ME NO RUN-AROUND!

I KNOW THIS IS A HOSPITAL! --AIN'T NO RESEARCH CENTER!

S-STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HIM!?

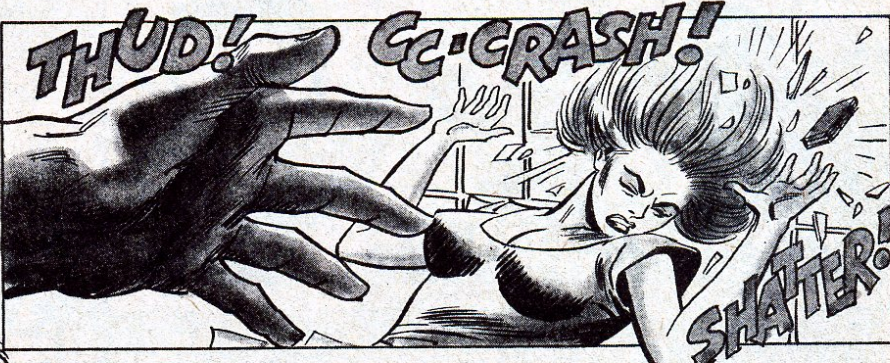
IF YOU DOCS DON'T FIX MY KNEE, I'LL USE YOUR NECK FOR MY BELT!



YOU ALL LIE! LIE LIKE RUGS!

HERE'S A FIRST-AID KIT!

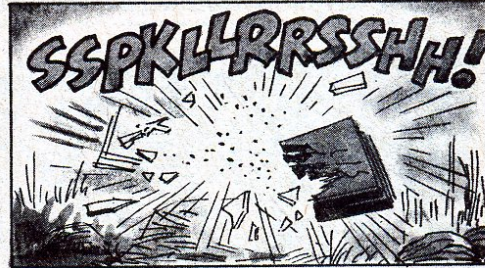
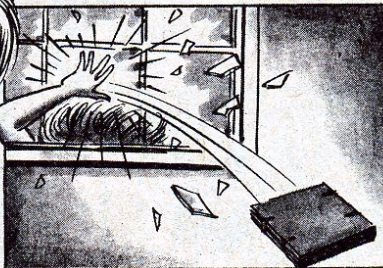
GIVE IT TO ME, BROAD! I'LL PATCH MYSELF UP IF NOBODY ELSE WILL!



THUD!

CC-CRASH!

SHATTER!



SSPKLLRRSSH!



MISS SCHIFF! WHAT?--

THAT BIKER CREEP HIT ME!

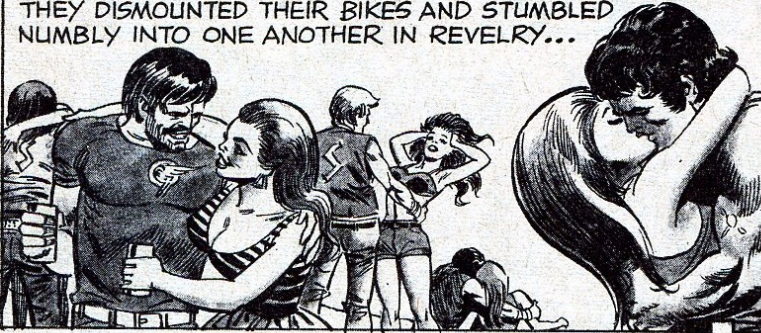
320 CULTURE FLEW OUT THE WINDOW!



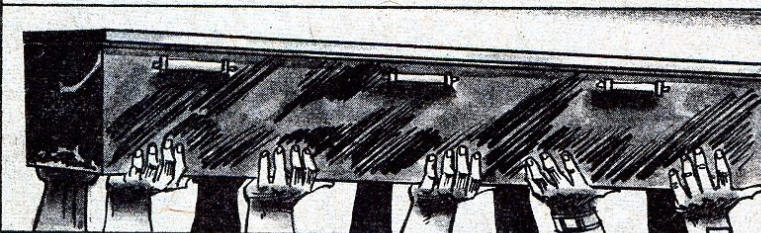
BUT FATE PLAYS STRANGE MUSIC, AND THE LYRIC SEA-WINDS EDDIED AND SWIRLED THE FLOATING **MUTATION #320** 5 MILES UP THE ROAD, TO THE SIGHT OF A PANORAMA OF MOTORCYCLE HOODLUMS PREPARING TO PAY THEIR LAST COARSE RESPECTS...



OCEAN WAVES, CRASHING, POUNDING ON POISONED FISH CARCASSES PROVIDED THE MUSIC FOR A DRUNKEN BALLET OF BRUTISH FORMS WITH WASTED ANIMALISTIC MINDS, AS THEY DISMOUNTED THEIR BIKES AND STUMBLED NUMBLY INTO ONE ANOTHER IN REVELRY...



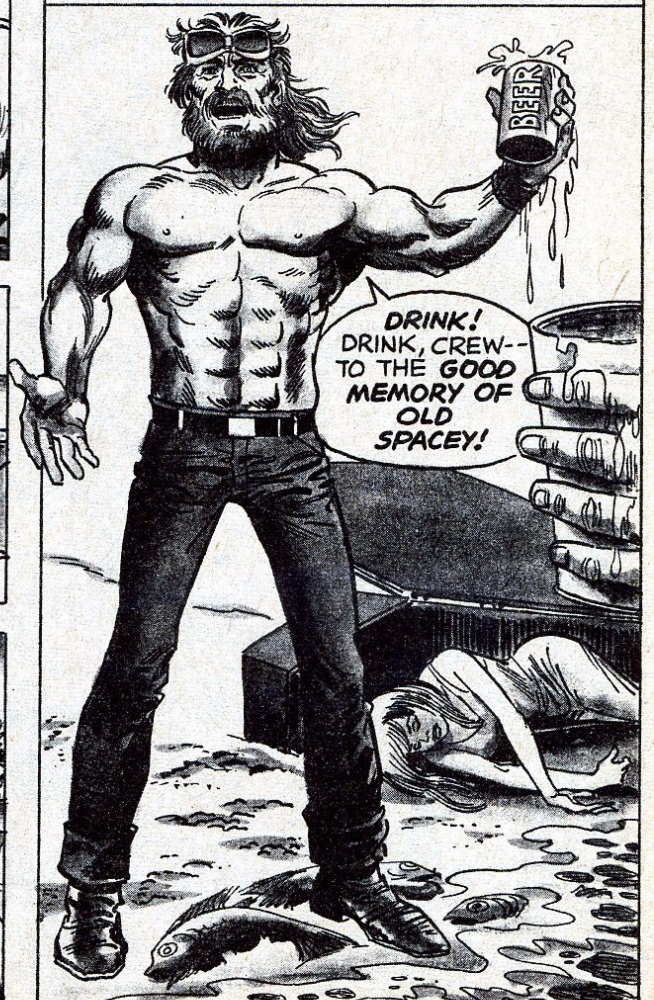
TO A ROUSING OFF-KEY CHORUS OF A REFRAIN FROM THE SOUNDTRACK THEME FROM HER LATEST 3-D OPUS, **SPACEY JAGLIN** WAS HEFTED ALOFT IN DUBIOUS DIGNITY...



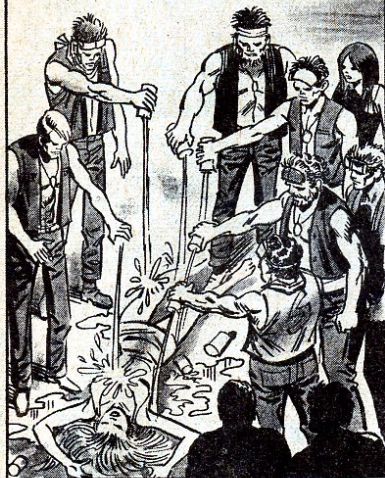
BUT A DRUNKEN LURCH NULLIFIED ALL ATTEMPTS AT ANY DIGNITY...



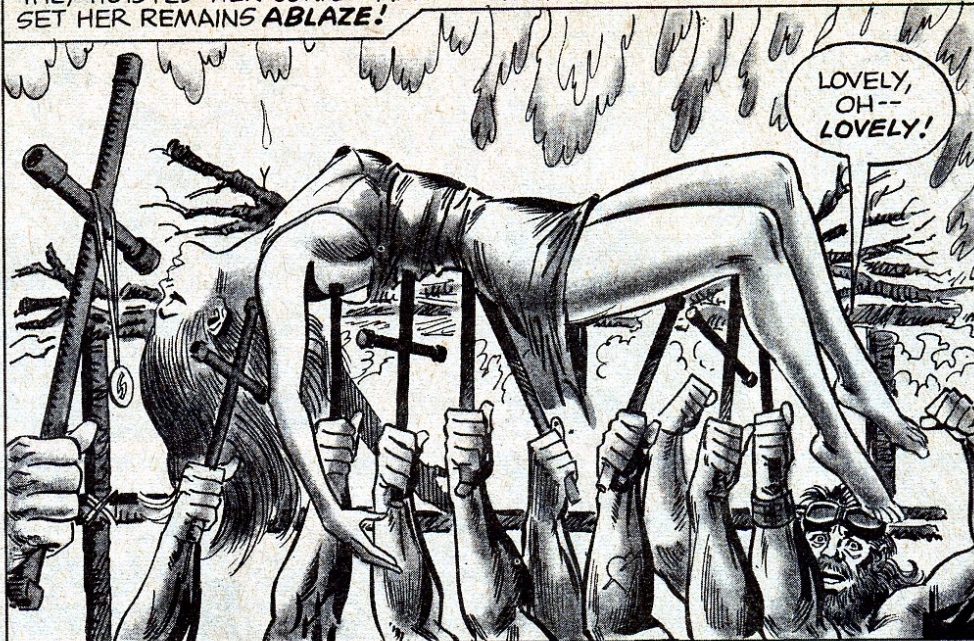
THE PATHETIC CARCASS OF THE LONELY, MISUNDERSTOOD, POP SUPERSTAR TUMBLED WITH A FLOP BEFORE HIS BOOTS...THE **LEADER AND HIGH PRIEST-GURU** WITH THE LAST SHREDS OF HIS DRUG-ROTTED MIND, GROPED FOR APPROPRIATE WORDS--EYES GLAZED...BODY SWAYING...



AT THE COMMAND OF THE FANATICAL "HOLY MAN" LEADER, EACH MEMBER OF THE PRIMITIVE AND SAVAGE SUPERSTITIOUS HERD FILED BY, AND PREPARED HER BROKEN BODY FOR CREMATION!

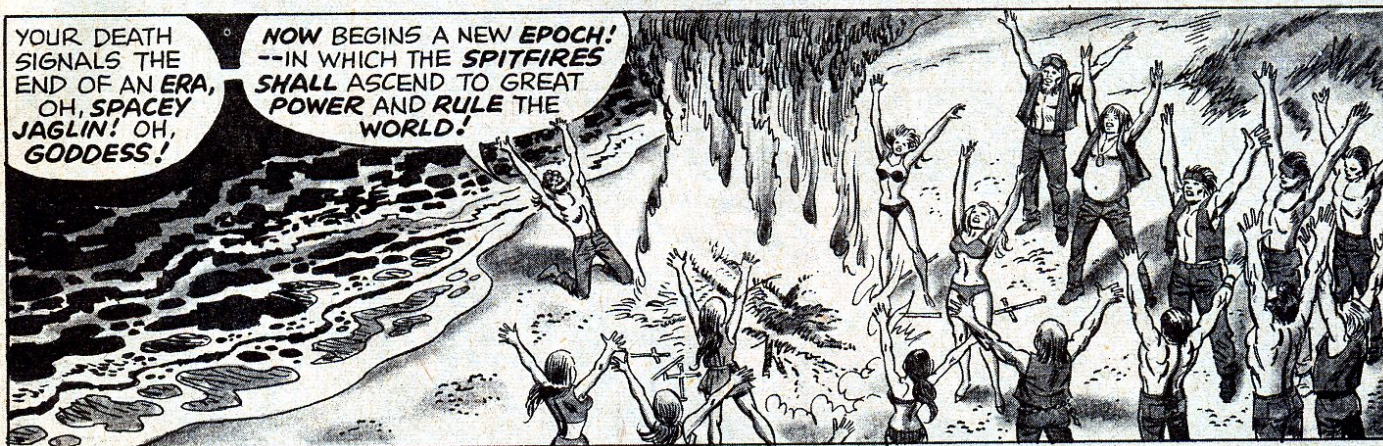


AND TO THE RHYTHMIC SHOUTS OF HIS MUMBO-JUMBO GURLI-RAVINGS, THEY HOISTED HER CORPSE ALOFT WITH TIRE-IRONS AND CROW-BARS, AND SET HER REMAINS **ABLAZE!**

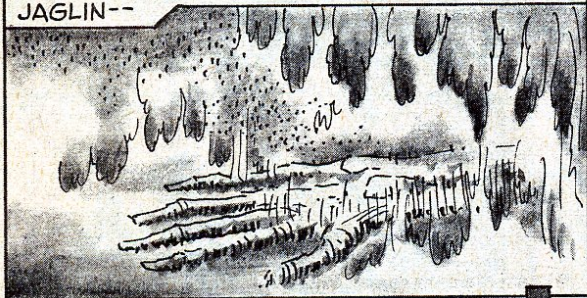


YOUR DEATH SIGNALS THE END OF AN ERA, OH, SPACEY JAGLIN! OH, GODDESS!

NOW BEGINS A NEW EPOCH! --IN WHICH THE **SPITFIRES** SHALL ASCEND TO GREAT POWER AND RULE THE WORLD!



BUT THE CHEMICAL LAWS OF THE UNIVERSE TO NOT BOW TO SUPERSTITIOUS-MONGERS, AND THE HEAT FUSED A **COMPOUND OF FORMALDEHYDE**, AND THE DRUGS THAT HAD KILLED SPACEY JAGLIN--

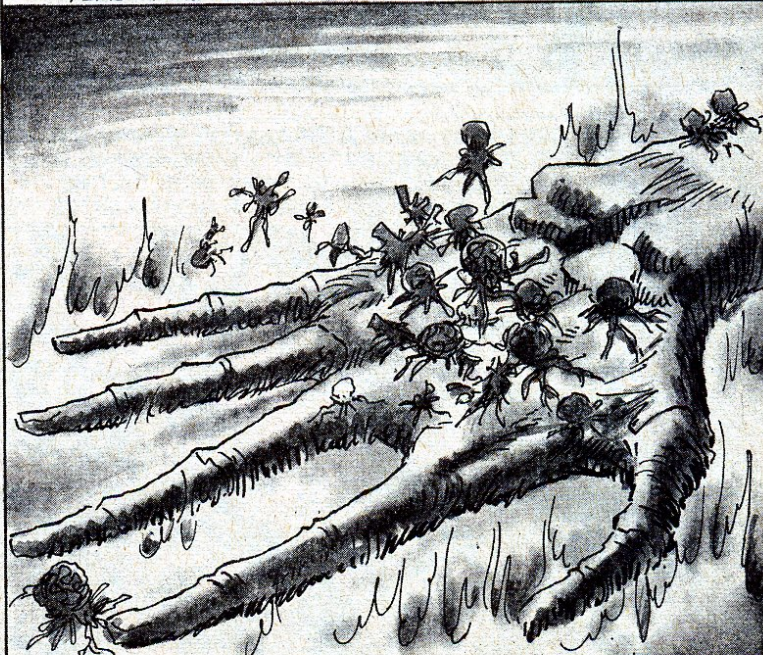


AND THE PECULIAR **COMPOUND** WAS ABSORBED BY **MUTATION # 320**--



AND IT **NOURISHED MUTATION # 320!**--

AND THE **INVIGORATED MUTATION #320** BEGAN TO RISE LIKE YEAST AND CONTINUE TO **GROW AND MULTIPLY--**



AND ONCE SPARKED TO ACCELERATED GROWTH, IT **WOULD NOT STOP!**

FOR IT IS
RIGHT THAT
SPACEY'S
SPITFIRES
GAIN
VENGEANCE!

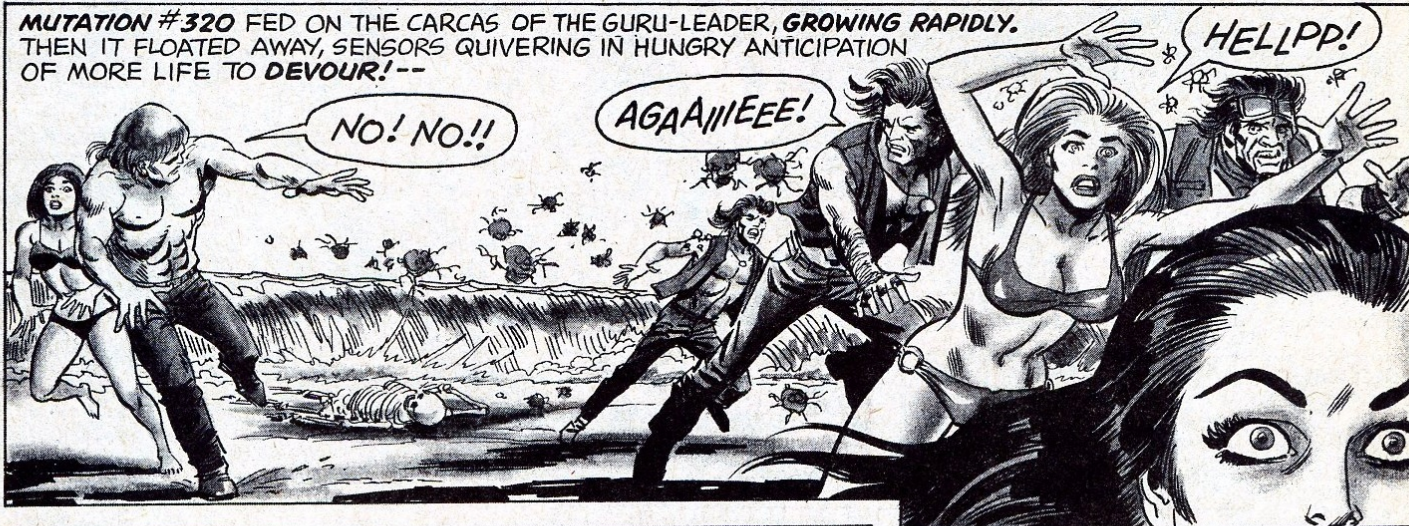
HER NAMESAKE ARMY
SHALL OVERRUN
AMERICA!-- THEN THE
WORLD! GRANT US A
SIGN OF APPROVAL,
O POWERS OF SPIRIT
AND GLORY!



BUT REALITY NEITHER HEARS
NOR HEEDS THE RANTINGS
OF A MYSTIC...



MUTATION #320 FED ON THE CARCAS OF THE GURU-LEADER, GROWING RAPIDLY.
THEN IT FLOATED AWAY, SENSORS QUIVERING IN HUNGRY ANTICIPATION
OF MORE LIFE TO DEVOUR!--

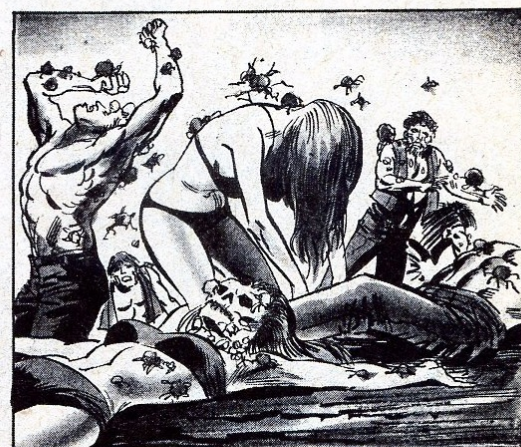
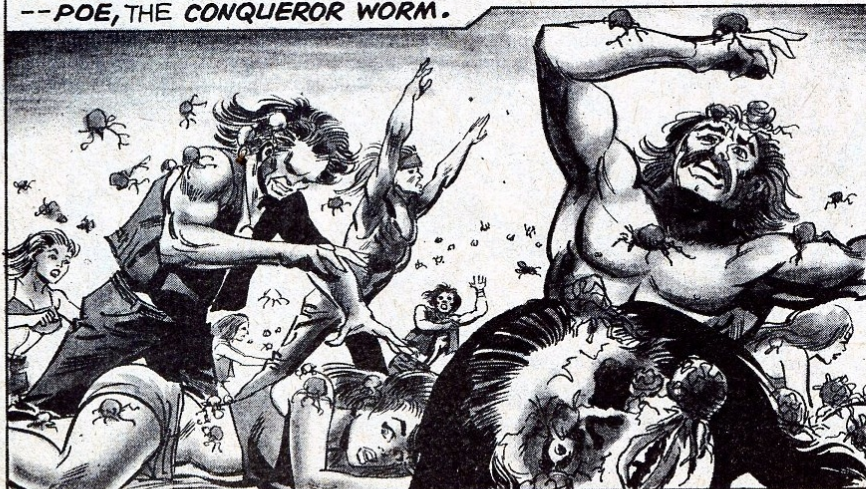


NO! NO!!

AGAAIIIEE!

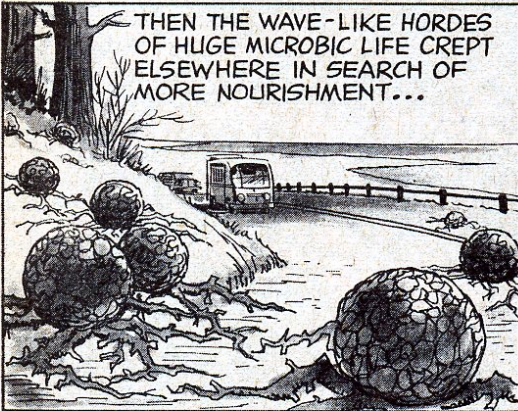
HELPP!

"BUT SEE, AMID THE MIMIC ROLT A CRAWLING SHAPE INTRUDE! A
BLOOD-RED THING THAT WRITHES WITHOUT THE SCENIC SOLITUDE!
IT WRITHES!--WITH MORTAL PANGS, THE MIMES BECOME ITS FOOD,
AND THE ANGELS SOB AT VERMIN FANGS IN HUMAN GORE IMBUED."
--POE, THE CONQUEROR WORM.



"GOLDEN LADS AND GIRLS ALL MUST
AS CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS, COME TO DUST."
--WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
CYMBALINE, ACT 4, SCENE 2

GROWING, EVER GROWING!--SOON **MUTATION #320** WAS A TOWERING HEAP OF **MALIGNANCY!**---DIGESTING HUNDREDS OF TERROR-STRICKEN BIKERS IN A MATTER OF **MINUTES!** THE SPORES OF **DEATH** SURGED ONWARD, **STILL GROWING!!**



THEN THE WAVE-LIKE HORDES OF HUGE MICROBIC LIFE CREPT ELSEWHERE IN SEARCH OF MORE NOURISHMENT...



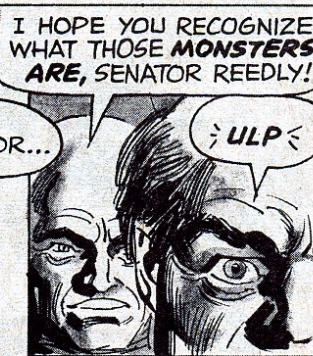
AND THOSE WHO WERE UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE THEIR CAR WINDOWS UNROLLED DID NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO REGRET THEIR MISTAKE...



DON'T PANIC, NURSE! SECURE THE DOORS AND WINDOWS!--

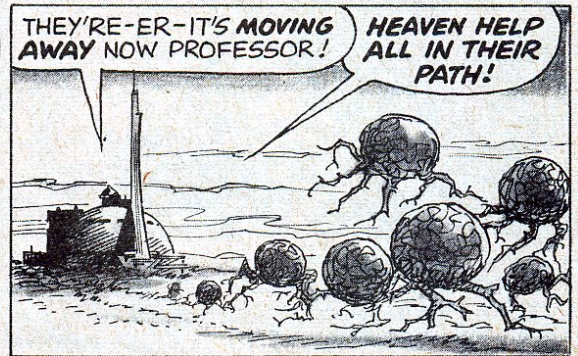
WE CAN WEATHER THIS OUT!

YES, PROFESSOR...



I HOPE YOU RECOGNIZE WHAT THOSE **MONSTERS ARE**, SENATOR REEDLY!

ULP

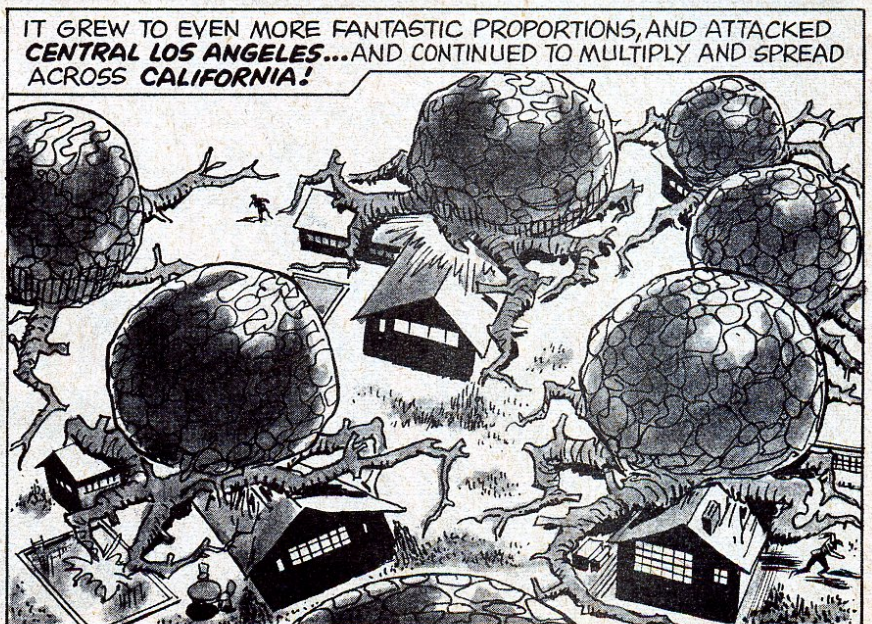


THEY'RE-ER-IT'S MOVING AWAY NOW PROFESSOR!

HEAVEN HELP ALL IN THEIR PATH!



MUTATION #320 THEN SPREAD ON DOWN TO THE OUTSKIRT BEACH RESORTS OF LOS ANGELES...



IT GREW TO EVEN MORE FANTASTIC PROPORTIONS, AND ATTACKED **CENTRAL LOS ANGELES...** AND CONTINUED TO MULTIPLY AND SPREAD ACROSS **CALIFORNIA!**

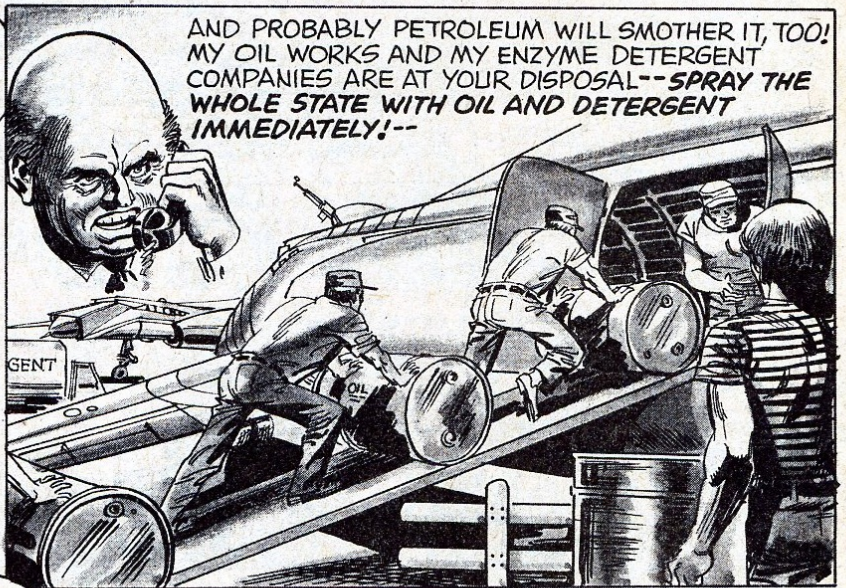
WITHIN AN HOUR, **MUTATION #320** HAD GROWN SO HUGE THAT IT CROWDED OVER MOST OF **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**...AND NOT JUST SATIATING ITS APPETITE WITH ANIMAL-LIFE, AS BY THEN MOST SURVIVING PEOPLE WERE SECURED BEHIND LOCKED DOORS, **MUTATION #320** ACQUIRED A TASTE FOR PLANTS AND TREES, AS IT GREW--AN **IMMENSE, CREEPING CARPET OF DEATH!!**



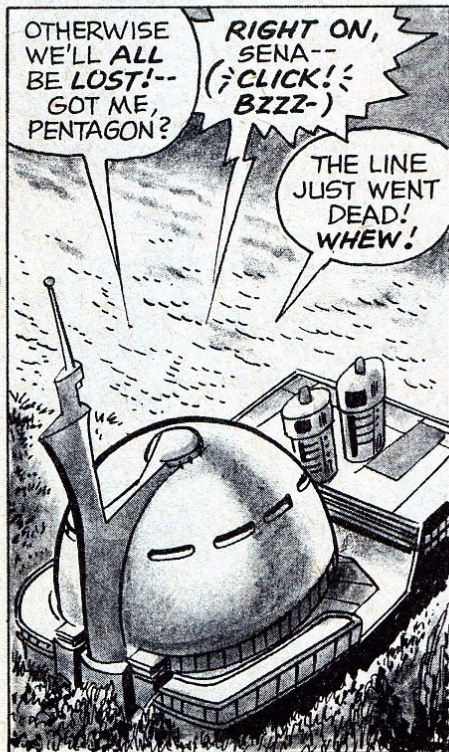
HELLO, PENTAGON? YES--THIS **IS** SENATOR REEDLY!--

BEFORE THE LINES **FAIL**, HERE'S THE **BEST STRATEGY!**

THE SPORES ARE VULNERABLE TO **ORDINARY DETERGENT ENZYMES!--**



AND PROBABLY PETROLEUM WILL SMOTHER IT, TOO! MY OIL WORKS AND MY ENZYME DETERGENT COMPANIES ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL--**SPRAY THE WHOLE STATE WITH OIL AND DETERGENT IMMEDIATELY!--**



OTHERWISE WE'LL **ALL** BE LOST!-- GOT ME, PENTAGON?

RIGHT ON, SENA-- (CLICK!! BZZZ-)

THE LINE JUST WENT DEAD! **WHEW!**



THERE!-- IT WAS A **GREAT SACRIFICE**, BUT THE HUMAN RACE WILL BE **SAVED!**

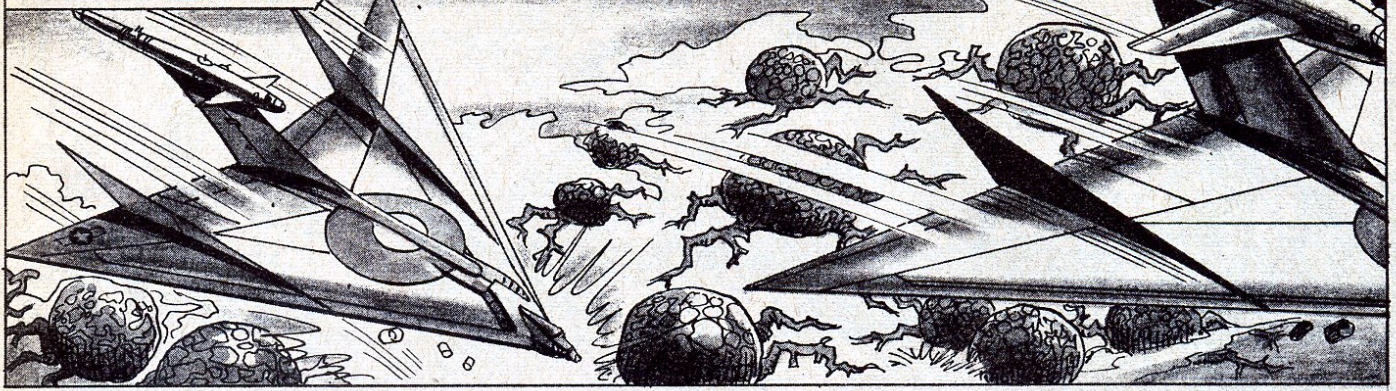
PERHAPS THIS IS THE **ONE CRISIS** THAT WILL **UNIFY MANKIND!!** FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, TECHNOLOGY WILL BE USED **WISELY** BY **INDUSTRY'S POLITICIANS**, AND THE LIVES LOST TODAY WERE NOT LOST IN VAIN!



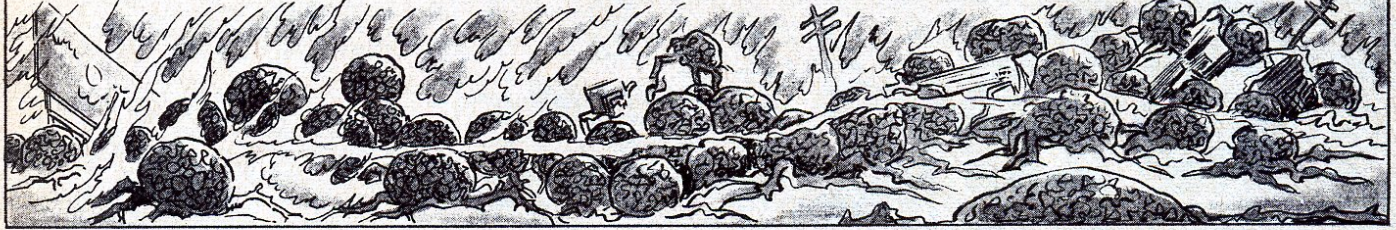
WELL, ISN'T THAT **QUAINT!--**

STOW AND SHOVE YOUR INAUGURATION SPEECH, **SENATOR!**

AS DEADLY CARGOES OF OIL AND DETERGENT WERE DROPPED OVER THE VAST LENGTH OF CALIFORNIA, THE PROFESSOR SPOKE SOLEMNLY... "WE DEVELOPED **MUTATION #320** IN HOPES OF REPLACING EARTH'S **OXYGEN** LOST TO PLANKTON-DESTROYING **OIL** AND **DETERGENT** POLLUTION."



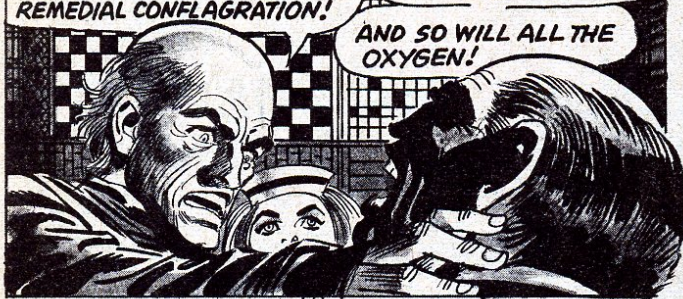
"THE VAST DOSAGE OF **OIL** AND **ENZYMES** YOU ORDERED WILL DESTROY **MUTATION #320**, ALL RIGHT--" CONTINUED THE PROFESSOR, AS MILES AND MILES OF **OIL-SOAKED MUTATION #320** WERE SET ABLAZE WITH **NAPALM**...



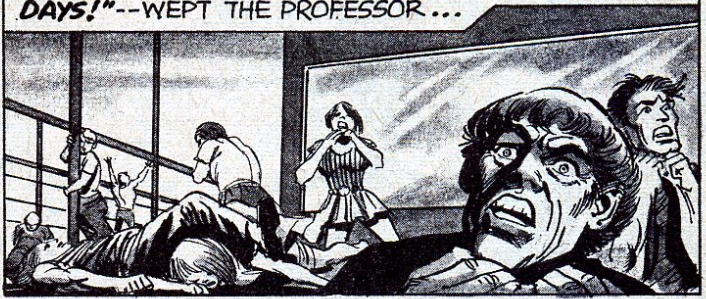
BY NOW, THE SPORES MUST BE ALL OVER THE **GLOBE**--NO PLACE WILL BE SPARED THE **REMEDIAL CONFLAGRATION!**

THEN THE LAND-PLANTS AND THE SEA-PLANKTON WILL ALL GO!--

AND SO WILL ALL THE **OXYGEN!**



"SOON YOU, ME, THAT HOODLUM WHO BROKE THE SLIDE-- WE'LL DIE OF **ASPHYXIATION!**" SCREAMED THE PROFESSOR... "ALL **OXYGEN** WILL BE GONE IN ABOUT **FOUR DAYS!**"--WEPT THE PROFESSOR...



IT'S GETTING HARD TO BREATHE, NURSE!

SLASH THE SENATOR'S **STOMACH OPEN!**

ANY SCIENTIST KNOWS--POLITICIANS ARE FULL OF **HOT AIR!**

THE END